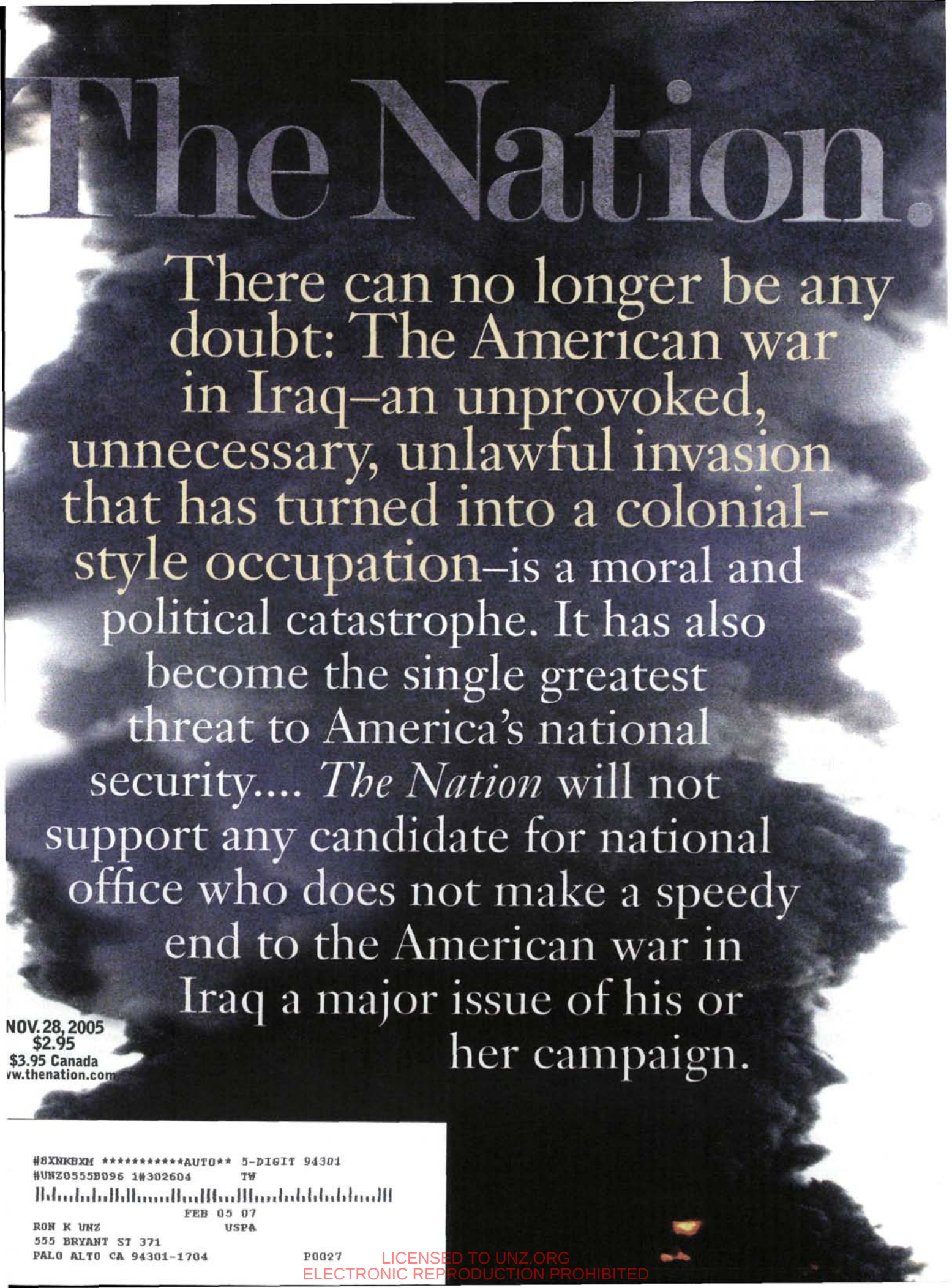
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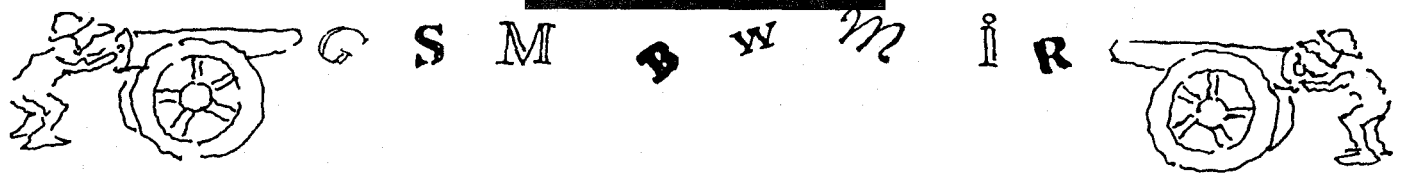

PARDON ME, DO YOU SPEAK LIBERAL?

Bellingham, Wash.

■ Congratulations to Eric Alterman for "Corrupt, Incompetent & *Off Center*" ["The Liberal Media," Nov. 7]. Pulling the facts together like this is a service to the progressive community, as it helps re-instill hope that change is not only possible but on its way. I wonder, though, if we really need a new language for liberals or just a way to get the word out. I recently ran for County Council here in Whatcom County on a progressive "relocalization" platform and was surprised at the support I got from self-described conservative Republicans. They were as thrilled as anyone to hear someone actually talk about the issues. Of course, I didn't make it through the primary. My $800 campaign was little match for the $17,000 spent by the incumbent. But it did start a conversation that had been missing, and many people thanked me for it. Columns like Alterman's gave me the background information for these conversations. DAVE EWOLDT

RATTLE & HUMPH

Medford, Mass.

■ U2 "bombastic"? Compared to who? Liszt? Gilbert and Sullivan? Marilyn Manson? Gilbert O'Sullivan? Doug Henwood ["Bono Meets Dr. Shock," Oct. 31] should push the button on his radio—from NPR to music—occasionally. That way he'd know that U2 is "expansive" or "grandiose." You need two guitars to be "bombastic," man. C'mon. MICHAEL BARRY

HENWOOD REPLIES

New York City

■ Bombastic, yes. Pompous and bloatedly anthemic too. And I speak as someone who won the "Best Music on a Radio Show About Economics & Politics" from the *Village Voice*, in its Best of NYC 2005. By the way, I almost never listen to NPR. Too dull. DOUG HENWOOD

Producer, Behind the News
WBAI, 99.5 FM

LET'S HEAR IT FOR RUSSIA (& FDR)!

Easton, Conn.

■ Eric Alterman's self-satisfied attack on FDR (cum plug for his book) ["The Liberal Media," Oct. 24] has the unpleasant smell of much American cold war writing: The United States won the war. Stalin was murderous, de Gaulle vainglorious, Churchill unreasonable and so on. Actually, if any one nation defeated Germany, it was, of course, Russia. De Gaulle's vanity was not personal but on behalf of France, and that way and in no other way France remained an important nation. Churchill was reasonable enough to realize that no nation, ever, after being defeated in one war and then triumphant in the next one, would not expect to make up for the losses. American wailing about the Yalta "giveaway" was caused by four years of war during which the role of the Soviet Union was systematically ignored or belittled here.

HANS KONING

ALTERMAN REPLIES

New York City

■ Well, I'm convinced...

ERIC ALTERMAN

LET THEM EAT GAS

Flemington, WV

■ I was born and raised in Yreka in Siskiyou County, California, and Sasha Abramsky has told the sad truth about my old hometown and other communities like it ["Running on Fumes," Oct. 17]. I live and work in West Virginia, and for many people here the story's the same. Sad thing is, if this were a foreign entity attacking us, we'd do something. Since it's self-inflicted, we will do nothing, and for the most part quietly submit. CHAD PEERY

Somerville, Mass.

■ Sasha Abramsky mentions two brothers who quit their jobs because they could no longer afford to drive their pickup trucks from the small town where they live to the small city where they work. Carpooling would have cut their gas expenses nearly in half. Drivers in a two-person car pool will pay $1.70 for a gallon of gas in the remote towns Abramsky worries about. Of course, this doesn't deserve notice alongside the billion-dollar SUV bailout both Republicans and Democrats are gearing up for. After all, carpooling is for commies. ERIK BRUNAR

Washington, DC

■ *The Nation* ought not to be calling for lower gas prices—even if that means passing up an opportunity to criticize Bush Administration incompetence. Gas prices should be higher and remain so if we are to shift to an economy that runs on mass transit, reduces our carbon emissions and slows global warming. If living in detached houses in a rural town is economically unsustainable for the residents of Yreka, then they can move to apartments in towns closer to their jobs. It has been an ecological catastrophe that gas prices have been kept artificially low through our subsidies to the oil industry. Americans should pay a price for gasoline that reflects its true economic and ecological cost. If that forces people to trade in their SUVs for Honda Accords and to live in more densely populated areas, so much the better. But *The Nation*'s reactionary assumption seems to be that we ought to pander to every citizen's expectation that he can live far from work and drive a gas guzzler while the rest of us shoulder the burden of enabling him to do so. The liberal solution to this region's woes is clearly to raise the tax on gasoline and use the proceeds to improve and expand local mass transit. BEN ADLER

Boston

■ I was extremely disappointed in "Running on Fumes," which failed to consider the toll today's over-subsidized car culture takes on low-income Americans. The most needy and impoverished classes suffer still more because they cannot afford the entry fee of an automobile; meanwhile, society—the car industry, the upper-income users, the oil interests—nurtures highway-first priorities. In the end the poor bear the burden of buying and supporting an automobile and living in a world deprived by inequitable government policies of good public transportation. This split society was, of course, painfully and graphically illustrated by the inability of many low-income New Orleaneans to evacuate their city prior to Katrina as their wealthier neighbors SUV-ed to higher ground.

Abramsky's claim that higher gas prices mean an "end for working-class towns" ignores the way cities are built, and unbuilt, as highways and other benefits to the car culture undercut urban America and the transit systems that make it livable. Meanwhile, the poor who can't afford the ticket—some $7,000 a year for an automobile—are deprived in their work and life choices. It is the car and the highway subsidies for moving settlements away from walkable, transit-friendly neighborhoods that hurt city and citizen alike, downtown and small town at once. JANE HOLTZ KAY

ABRAMSKY REPLIES

Sacramento, Calif.

■ Many letters in response to my article suggested two things: one, that we should all live in high-density cities because that's more environmentally sound; and two, that the people I wrote about should simply bite the bullet and buy cars that get better gas mileage.

People don't always make entirely unconstrained choices. People are often born in places like Yreka rather than choosing to move there—their life history is there, their families are there, their social and economic networks are there. And poor people often don't have the luxury of choosing what cars they drive; they buy the hand-me-down ve-

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EDITORIALS

Democrats and the War

Everything that needs to be known is now known: The reasons the Bush Administration gave for the American war in Iraq were all falsehoods or deceptions, and every day the US occupation continues deepens the very problems it was supposed to solve. Therefore there can no longer be any doubt: The war—an unprovoked, unnecessary and unlawful invasion that has turned into a colonial-style occupation—is a moral and political catastrophe. As such it is a growing stain on the honor of every American who acquiesces, actively or passively, in its conduct and continuation.

The war has also become the single greatest threat to our national security. Its human and economic costs are spiraling out of control, with no end in sight. It has driven America's reputation in the world to a historic low point. In the meantime, real threats suffer terrible neglect. These include more terrorist attacks, jeopardized oil supplies, rising tension with China, the spread of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and even natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina. All are pushed aside as this Administration pours the country's blood, treasure and political energy into a futile war. In short, ending the Iraq War is the most pressing issue facing America today. Until it is ended, a constructive national security policy cannot be forged.

Americans are well on their way to a full appreciation of the dimensions of this debacle. In an October CBS news poll, 59 percent of citizens surveyed and 73 percent of Democrats now want an end to US military involvement in Iraq. But this growing majority has made its judgment with virtually no help from our nation's leaders. Most shameful has been the Democratic Party's failure to oppose the war. Indeed, support for it has been bipartisan: A Republican President and Congress made the policy, and almost all of the leading Democrats—most of the honorable exceptions are members of the House of Representatives—supported it from the outset and continue to do so. To their credit, would-be presidential candidate Senator Russell Feingold and former Senator Gary Hart have recently made strong antiwar statements. More recently two other presidential contenders, Senator John Kerry and former Senator John Edwards, have begun to call for a shift in policy, though still in vague and reticent terms. More typical, however, are the other presidential hopefuls, Senators Hillary Clinton, Joseph Biden and Evan Bayh, who continue to huddle for cover in "the center." They offer little alternative to Bush's refrain "We must stay the course!" Nor do the party's Congressional leaders and its head, Howard Dean, once a leader of antiwar sentiment. Can such politicians, who cannot even follow a majority—in the Democratic Party, a large majority—really be considered leaders?

The Nation therefore takes the following stand: We will not support any candidate for national office who does not make a speedy end to the war in Iraq a major issue of his or her campaign. We urge all voters to join us in adopting this position. Many worry that the aftermath of withdrawal will be ugly, but we can now see that the consequences of staying will be uglier still. Fear of facing the consequences of Bush's disaster should not be permitted to excuse the creation of a worse disaster by continuing the occupation.

We firmly believe that antiwar candidates, with the other requisite credentials, can win the 2006 Congressional elections, the 2008 Democratic presidential primaries and the subsequent national election. But this fight, and our stand, must begin now.

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In the coming weeks and months *The Nation* will help identify—and encourage support for—those candidates prepared to bring a speedy end to the war and to begin the hard work of forging a new national security policy that an end to the Iraq War will make possible.

There is no other way to save America's security and honor. And to those Democratic "leaders" who continue to insist that the safer, more electable course is to remain openly or silently complicit in the war, we say, paraphrasing the moral philosopher Hillel: If not now, when? If not you, who?

The Delphi Oracle

The mid-October decision by Delphi Corp. to seek Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection and massive labor givebacks, followed by General Motors' effort to open its contract with the United Auto Workers (UAW) for other concessions, are watershed events in American labor and economic history. They announce the final shredding of any social contract in industrial relations and drive a long nail into the coffin of our employer-based welfare state. Unless addressed, they promise economic disaster not just for hundreds of thousands of auto workers but much of the American middle class.

While social democracies in Europe and elsewhere built a "social wage" in the postwar years—benefits and guarantees like retirement income, health insurance, childcare supports and training available to all citizens—the United States built a private benefits system, rooted in particular employer contracts. This private system is grossly inefficient as well as inequitable, and it reduces competitiveness with firms operating in more rational systems. Now Big Auto, so crucial in building that system, proposes to dump it without offering an alternative that satisfies health and retirement needs.

Delphi's move could have been predicted from its recent hire of Steve Miller as CEO. He has made a long career, going back to the Chrysler bailout of a generation ago, of using government handouts and corporate welfare in the form of bankruptcy to restructure firms while looting workers' assets. Just before he joined Delphi, Miller was CEO of Bethlehem Steel and a board member at United Airlines (UAL). Before selling off Bethlehem he eliminated health insurance for 95,000 retirees and offloaded the firm's underfunded pension obligations to the government's Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation. And he offloaded UAL's even larger underfunded pension to the PBGC, itself now underfunded. At the time, *Forbes* announced that this spectacular disappearance of worker savings foretold "the end of pensions"—not just for UAL but the country. It has since been imitated by Delta and Northwest. Miller took the job at Delphi because he thought it offered a "pivotal position to impact the restructuring of America's auto industry," meaning more of the same.

Miller's plan for Delphi is cynical and wildly greedy. The bankruptcy is targeted only at Delphi's 51,000 US-based workers, less than a third of its worldwide labor force. It is well financed, with Delphi holding $1.6 billion in cash and a new credit line for as much as $4.5 billion in low-interest debt from Citigroup

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ANOTHER "DRUG BABY" MEDIA SCARE?

By Barry Lester, PhD, Director, Infant Development Center, Women & Infants Hospital, Providence RI

Recently (July 27, 2005), Medical News Today (MNT) carried a story with the alarming title, "Single prenatal dose of meth causes birth defects." Join Together, a prominent website, published a summary of the story with a similar headline and opening with the possibly more inflammatory, "Pregnant women who use methamphetamine even once put their unborn children at risk of birth defects" (July 29, 2005). **These headlines misleadingly imply that the research involved women when it actually involved mice, and both the original story and the Join Together summary failed to mention that this animal research may have little if any bearing on the health outcome of humans prenatally exposed to methamphetamines...**

Animal research has always been critical for understanding human problems.... But there are also limits to applying animal findings to humans.

This is one of the lessons we learned from the hype that surrounded the media-created "crack baby" of the 1980s. The media was quick to report early animal studies suggesting that prenatal exposure to cocaine caused serious and irreversible defects in children. The first round of human studies also predicted dire consequences. But these studies were preliminary and flawed. The results of larger, well-controlled studies failed to find any of the serious defects or malformations shown by the early animal studies or human studies...

Nevertheless, in response to this alarmist reporting, our nation became very angry with mothers who used cocaine during pregnancy and wanted them punished for harming their unborn child. Mothers were prosecuted instead of being offered treatment, and record numbers of children were removed from their biological mothers overburdening an already over-burden foster-care system...

But what does this kind of animal research tell us about human babies? That question was addressed in March 2005 by a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services expert panel reviewing the literature on methamphetamine. They concluded that this kind of mouse study -- that uses direct injection into the peritoneum -- is not relevant to humans because pregnant women don't inject the drugs they are dependent upon into the peritoneum -- the membrane that surrounds the fetuses they are carrying...

The entire article is at www.jointogether.org/y/0,2521,578073,00.html

Common Sense for Drug Policy
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EDITORIALS

Global Markets Inc. and JP Morgan Chase. Nothing in US bankruptcy law—recently tightened for individuals but not for corporations—says a company actually has to be broke to enjoy its protections. And Delphi is not broke; of its forty-five US plants, only eleven are in a separate holding group of financially troubled enterprises.

As the price of not canceling the workers' contract and liquidating their pension, Miller is demanding a drop in average wages from $27 to $10 an hour, concessions that would total more than $2 billion a year. This is about 25 percent more than Delphi's current losses, counting the money-losing plants, and will be pure profit once those are eliminated.

In responding, the UAW is constrained by GM's dependence on Delphi and the industry pattern-bargaining that was once the union's strength. If the UAW strikes the supplier, it will cripple the old parent and risk even more damage to its members. If it refuses givebacks at GM, it will make Delphi's position worse and increase Miller's bargaining power in the bankruptcy proceedings. If it concedes to either, the givebacks will rapidly become an industry norm. In the contract opening that GM has requested and that the UAW has already agreed to put to a membership vote, GM has asked for $1 billion in annual givebacks. This is much more than the prescription co-pay deal widely cited in the press. As much as two-thirds of the concession is in forgone wage and cost-of-living adjustments. Ford and DaimlerChrysler have already announced that they will be asking for whatever GM gets on their partial contract opening. Whatever wage cuts Miller gets at Delphi will be a marker in the full Big Three contract negotiations in 2007, when current contracts expire.

So what is to be done? We could replace our private welfare state with a public nonprofit one, including national health insurance and more generous Social Security retirement benefits. This would improve equity and competitiveness while sharply reducing costs, and save automakers about $2,000 per vehicle. We could re-reform our unique antiworker and corporate-favoring bankruptcy code while giving workers more protection of and control over their own savings. We could help the industry through a sensible energy policy of the sort it has always opposed, which would enlarge its domestic transportation market beyond automobiles and promote design of energy-efficient cars that the rest of the world might actually want to buy.

But doing these things will take time. In the meantime, how to minimize loss of jobs and pain to come? At least two-thirds of the pain will be felt at old plants in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana, with ripples through supply chains in Illinois and Wisconsin. These five auto-parts-intensive Great Lakes states have long needed a coordinated plan on manufacturing. Their governors should stop their Washington hand-wringing about national policy and finally craft a regional strategy back home. This should not aim at saving all manufacturing, much of which is not sustainable or worth keeping. But it should defend the high-wage, high-productivity sector, which is worth saving and growing. Withdrawing support that now goes to poor-performing companies could fund such a policy on a revenue-neutral (or better) basis. Public purchasing is one way to get new orders to better firms, but the governors should also pressure the Big Three to favor upgraded in-region suppliers. The governors should make any public spending on manufacturing—tax breaks, training subsidies, research grants and technical assistance—conditional on enforceable commitments to such purchasing, beginning with the work now done by doomed Delphi plants.

And while they're at it, the Midwest governors should combine their separate efforts at health insurance reform into a giant regional one. Such regional cooperation has often been discussed but seldom achieved. Maybe the shock of what's about to hit these states can interrupt that sorry history. Nothing focuses the mind like the prospect of being hanged.

CALVIN TRILLIN

Another Lesson in White House Values

We stand up for values. Here's what we believe:
Gay marriage is something we just can't conceive
Of happening ever. The thought causes dread.
Gay men should just marry nice women instead.
If some of them marry not women but chaps,
Our civilization would simply collapse.
Abortion is murder. If we had our druthers,
We'd jail docs who do it, and also the mothers.
And research on stem cells is evil, a sin,
And so is bad language, and flicks that show skin.
And families other than these God forbids:
A dad and a mom and two point three kids.
And we support Jesus, and, oh, by the way,
When we think it's needed, some torture's OK.

COMMENT

Yes, Virginia...

As this year's Virginia gubernatorial election approached, Republican governors from around the country stormed into the state to make the case for their party's nominee, right-winger Jerry Kilgore. "Everyone is watching," Idaho's Governor Dirk Kempthorne told the crowd at a fundraiser for Kilgore. "They are watching Virginia...to see whether conservatism is still on the march." On November 8 the voters of the state that has not backed a Democrat for President since Lyndon Johnson in 1964 gave Kempthorne and his fellow conservatives an answer: They elected Democrat Tim Kaine, derided for months by Republicans in an expensive, often vicious

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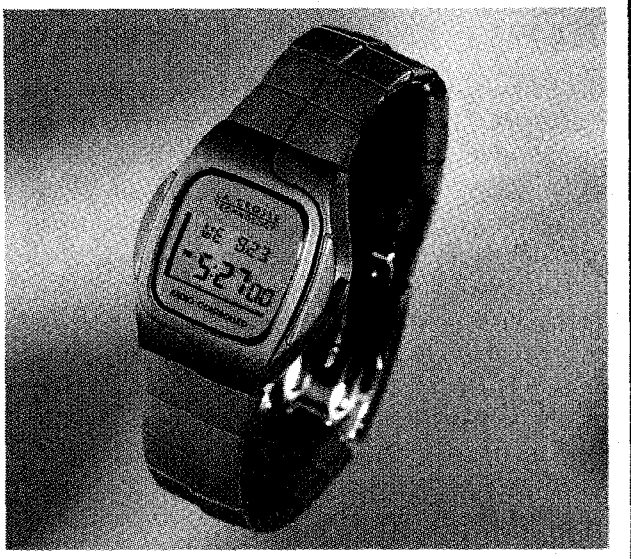
Does anyone really know what time it is?

Well, the U.S. Government wants to, so they created the National Institute of Standards and Technology, a component of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Time and Frequency Division, located in Boulder, Colorado, maintains the F-1 Fountain Atomic Clock, the nation's standard of time. This clock neither gains nor loses a second in 20 million years. This watch is the next best thing to having your own atomic clock, because it automatically displays the precise accurate time. It sets itself by receiving a time signal from the WWVB radio station. It adjusts itself for daylight



saving time and leap years, and it features a variety of practical and convenient features to fit your lifestyle.

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COMMENT

campaign as "the most liberal candidate who's ever run for governor in the Commonwealth of Virginia's history." Kaine was never quite the liberal his opponents claimed, but he has been an honest supporter of moves to increase taxes to fund education, transportation and environmental programs; a thoughtful critic of the death penalty; and a consistent proponent of racial justice in a state that is barely a generation away from the days of "massive resistance" to integration.

Kaine's backers will tell you that his win had a lot to do with the man and his campaign, as well as a ham-handed attempt by the Republicans to suggest that his discomfort with capital punishment meant that he would have gone easy on Adolf Hitler. But the candidate also benefited from a collapse of confidence in the Bush Administration and its Congressional allies. In Virginia, where a substantial portion of the electorate lives in the Washington suburbs, the daily stories of indictments, scandals, missteps and neglect—particularly of the victims of Hurricane Katrina—have taken their toll on the President's popularity. The state that gave Bush a solid 54 percent of the vote last year now gives him only a 41 percent approval rating. He's even less popular in the other state that held a gubernatorial election, New Jersey, where Bush's approval rating—34 percent—was so dismal that the Democratic candidate, Senator Jon Corzine, reenergized a flagging campaign by running TV ads that linked his Republican opponent to Bush. In what was once expected to be a close contest, Corzine won by ten points.

It's always a little dangerous to extrapolate from the results of off-year elections. But Democrats were crowing about their wins in the gubernatorial races this year and looking forward enthusiastically to next year's thirty-six statehouse contests. Even Republicans were acknowledging that the old Bush magic seemed to be fading. Kilgore actually avoided appearing with Bush at one of the President's two pre-election appearances in Virginia, and New Jersey Republicans pointedly asked the man they used to refer to as the campaigner-in-chief to stay out of their state, as did California Republicans, who were struggling to pass referendums designed to enhance Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's authority while undermining legislative Democrats.

Nowhere was the President's toxicity more potent than in Minnesota, where St. Paul Mayor Randy Kelly, a Democrat who broke ranks to back Bush in 2004, was swept from office by fellow Democrat Chris Coleman, who made it clear throughout the campaign that he was not a Bush man. Larry Jacobs, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for the Study of Politics and Governance, told reporters that the St. Paul vote is "Exhibit A" for the case that Bush's declining popularity is doing damage to old allies. In neighboring Minneapolis progressive Mayor R.T. Rybak was easily re-elected on a day when Democrats won most big-city mayoral contests.

Even where a Republican mayor prevailed, in New York City, he did so by running to the left not just of Bush but of many national Democrats: Incumbent Mike Bloomberg swept to reelection in the Big Apple after a campaign in which he courted labor unions, advocated affordable housing and denounced the Supreme Court nomination of John Roberts—backed by half the Senate's Democrats—because Roberts was insufficiently prochoice.

Not all the news was good for progressives. San Diego City Council member Donna Frye's two-year campaign to clean up the scandal-plagued politics of that city fell short, as she lost to a Republican who was backed by the city's business elites. In

LETTER FROM THE (OUTGOING) PUBLISHER

In the magazine business, survival is the ultimate test of success. Carey McWilliams, who edited *The Nation* from 1955 through 1975, once observed, "It is precisely because *The Nation*'s backers cared more about what it stood for than what it earned that the magazine survived where countless other publications with circulations in the millions have gone under."

There is, in my judgment, another reason for the survival of this cultural treasure, founded by the great Anglo-Irish journalist E.L. Godkin the year the Civil War ended. Over the years its stewards have shared the vision of its founders. *The Nation*'s original prospectus in 1865 promised that the new weekly "will not be the organ of any party, sect, or body." It was going to be a conscience, a gadfly "to wage war upon the vices of...exaggeration, and misrepresentation."

In studying *Nation* transitions past, I have come to believe that, important as what one does when one is on the job is, more important is what happens after one moves on.

It is therefore with a sense of accomplishment and institutional reassurance I report that this week Katrina vanden Heuvel will replace me as *The Nation*'s publisher and general partner. Katrina is the latest in a long line of *Nation* publisher-owners who include yours truly and extend back to Freda Kirchwey in the 1930s, '40s and '50s and Oswald Garrison Villard, who took over from his father in 1918. Katrina is the only woman editing (and now publishing) a political weekly in this country.

Katrina vanden Heuvel has an invaluable understanding of the role of the opinion magazine in general and the mission of *The Nation* in particular. I believe she is the ideal steward to carry forward *The Nation*'s extraordinary tradition. She has the trust and confidence of the *Nation* community.

As editor of the magazine for the past ten years, Katrina has defined *The Nation*'s voice in the aftermath of the cold war and in the traumatic post-9/11 years. The magazine under her leadership has clearly staked out the intellectual and political alternative to the Bush Administration's extremist agenda and has done much to mobilize our readers and the country against the misbegotten war in Iraq.

Carey McWilliams once said that the editor (and by extension the publisher) of *The Nation* is a captive of its tradition. I didn't quite understand the full meaning of that remark until I was privileged to live it. It has been an honor to be a part of that tradition. I look forward to continued contributions as publisher emeritus and a member of the *Nation* editorial board.

VICTOR NAVASKY, *publisher emeritus*

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Ohio, infighting among Democrats doomed a package of four constitutional amendments that would have reformed the politics of a state where one-party dominance by the Republicans has created what Democratic Representative Sherrod Brown, an enthusiastic backer of the reform proposals, accurately describes as "a culture of corruption." And in Texas voters passed another of those noxious anti–gay marriage referendums. In Maine, however, voters overwhelmingly rejected an attempt to scrap that state's new gay rights law.

The most encouraging referendum result of all came from Colorado, where voters endorsed a five-year suspension of the state's Taxpayer Bill of Rights, or TABOR, a "starve government" gimmick that placed severe limits on the ability of the state to raise and spend the resources needed to maintain quality schools and public services. Denver's *Rocky Mountain News* got it right in a postelection editorial that declared the big losers in the vote were "(anti-tax firebrands) Grover Norquist, Dick Armey and other national leaders in the 'drown government in a bathtub' movement who focused their efforts on making Colorado's TABOR a model of fiscal restraint." Like the results from Virginia, New Jersey and elsewhere, the vote from the once-red state of Colorado sends a hopeful signal that despite the best efforts of Karl Rove and his compatriots, it does not appear that conservatism is "still on the march."

JOHN NICHOLS

Arnold Show: Canceled

Beverly Hills

Golden State voters resoundingly handed The Arnold Show its cancellation notice Tuesday night. All eight ballot measures that constituted the special election called by Governor Schwarzenegger—widely considered a referendum on his political agenda—went down in flames.

As word came toward midnight that the most tightly fought of the ballot props was going to be defeated—a so-called paycheck protection measure that would have effectively barred public employee unions from making political donations—a restaurant full of Hawaiian-shirted nurses broke into a victory conga dance, singing, "We are the nurses, the mighty, mighty nurses!" They had come together for an "Aloha Arnold" election-night party ready to bid farewell to their Republican rival.

Wiping the running mascara from her eyes, the emotionally charged leader of the 65,000-member California Nurses Association, Rose Anne De Mauro, proclaimed total victory, telling the elated crowd, "A year ago Arnold said he was kicking our butts. But tonight, you know what? The shoe's on the other foot!" Indeed, it was back in January that Schwarzenegger targeted organized labor as the major obstacle to his "Year of Reform" agenda. Unionized nurses, teachers and firefighters

In Fact . . .

SOUTHERN DISCOMFORT

■ Bob Moser writes: Once a wartime President has lost support in gung-ho North Carolina—home to major Army, Air Force and Marine bases and longtime bastion of pro-military sentiment—it's safe to assume that he's lost it everywhere. A recent poll conducted by Elon University provided grim news, then, for George W. Bush and his Iraq adventure: 57 percent of Tar Heels said they disapproved of the President's handling of the war. But that wasn't the worst finding for the floundering Bush Administration. The poll showed that active military personnel, reservists and veterans in North Carolina had turned just as strongly against the war as nonmilitary citizens. More than 56 percent disapproved of his war leadership. In perhaps the most startling result of all, when they were asked whether the war with Iraq was "worth fighting" in the first place, a mere 19 percent of these soldiers, ex-soldiers and soldiers-in-waiting said yes.

UN-COMMON REJECTION

■ Don Guttenplan writes: Despite hauling Chancellor Gordon Brown back from Israel and flying Foreign Secretary Jack Straw from Moscow so they could vote, Tony Blair suffered his first-ever defeat in Parliament in early November when the House of Commons rejected a government bill to allow terrorist suspects to be held for ninety days without charge. Coming in the wake of Work and Pensions Secretary David Blunkett's forced resignation the previous week, Blair's loss—forty-nine Labour MPs voted against the government—was a huge, self-inflicted wound to his political authority. The defeat came despite a lobbying blitz by the Metropolitan Police commissioner, and in the face of opinion polls showing overwhelming public support for the government's position. Parliament's belated discovery of a backbone means that Tony Blair, who has already promised not to run again, remains in office, but not in power. The Iraq War's chickens may finally be coming home to roost.

WHAT—US WORRY?

■ The American Society of Magazine Editors selected *The Nation*'s November 13, 2000, cover (of Bush as Alfred E.Neuman) as one of the top forty magazine covers of the past forty years.

MINORITY/MAJORITY

■ **Permanent Minority.** Senator Joe Biden has already tried to tamp down speculation that Senate Democrats will filibuster the nomination of Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court, giving the ultraconservative nominee a boost by undermining other Democrats who have been speaking out against him.

■ **Toward the Majority.** Led by California Representative George Miller, Democrats successfully pressured George W. Bush to revoke his executive order that would have undermined prevailing wage rates on the Gulf Coast. —DAVID SIROTA

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COMMENT

lustily joined the battle, spent more than $100 million in an anti-Arnold ad campaign, drove the governor's favorability ratings down into the subarctic mid-30s and now can take full credit for handing him a crushing defeat that throws his 2006 re-election chances straight into the air.

Along with paycheck "protection," voters also turned down the governor's proposals for granting himself more budget authority, for political redistricting and for extending public school teacher probation from two to five years. So sweeping was the anti-Arnold backlash, voters rejected what was previously thought to be a slam-dunk measure, also endorsed by the governor, that would have imposed parental notification on minors seeking an abortion. Even a deceptive prescription-drug measure backed by $80 million in support from Big Pharma was knocked out.

"Here is a lesson that Democrats across the country can learn," said consumer activist Jamie Court, who has been advising the nurses union. "Follow the lead of these nurses and firefighters and run a populist campaign against corporate interests and see that you can win."

The special election was the costliest in state history, with at least $250 million spent on campaigning. Schwarzenegger had tried to use the vote as a direct appeal to the people over the heads of a strongly Democratic legislature. But the governor's proposals and his campaign skewed hard to the right, transforming his image in a very blue state from centrist dealmaker to partisan polarizer. The out-of-calendar vote sparked a wave of voter disgruntlement that the governor's political team failed to quell. The timing of the vote—as anti-Bush sentiment was mounting nationwide—no doubt also contributed to the governor's defeat.

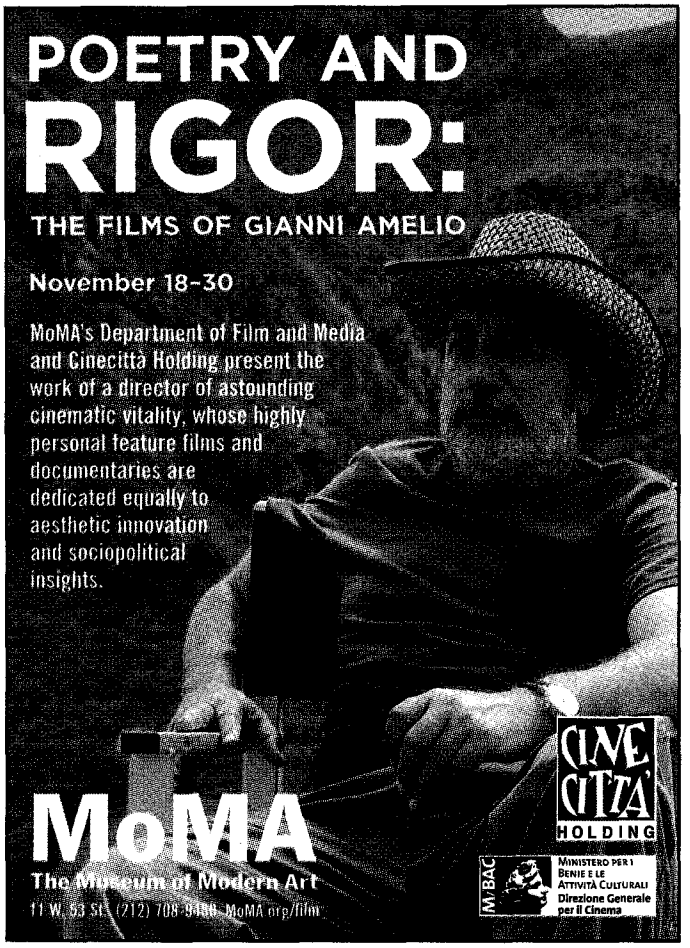
Just upstairs from the nurses, in a ballroom of the posh Beverly Hilton Hotel, Schwarzenegger appeared briefly before his dispirited supporters as the votes were still being counted. While he refused to acknowledge defeat, he contritely hinted at a more bipartisan approach to governance. "There is much work to be done," he said. "Believe it or not, I want to thank the people who were so vocally passionate against us."

At the nurses' victory party, actor/activist Warren Beatty responded to Schwarzenegger's vow, saying, "I don't think he has any choice. The governor now has to work in a bipartisan fashion." But there seems to be little incentive for Arnold's opposition to let up on any of the pressure they have brought to bear. In anticipation of Tuesday's defeat, speculation had been rampant that the governor might recruit a high-profile Democrat to serve as his postelection chief of staff to give his administration a more centrist sheen. Yet the cinemascope dimensions of Schwarzenegger's defeat have made him politically radioactive.

Democrats and organized labor will now surely increase their efforts to defeat the governor's re-election next year. "Everything we did yesterday, we're gonna do tomorrow," said the nurses union's De Mauro. "Where are we gonna be tomorrow? Wherever Arnold is."

MARC COOPER

Marc Cooper is a Los Angeles–based Nation *contributing editor.*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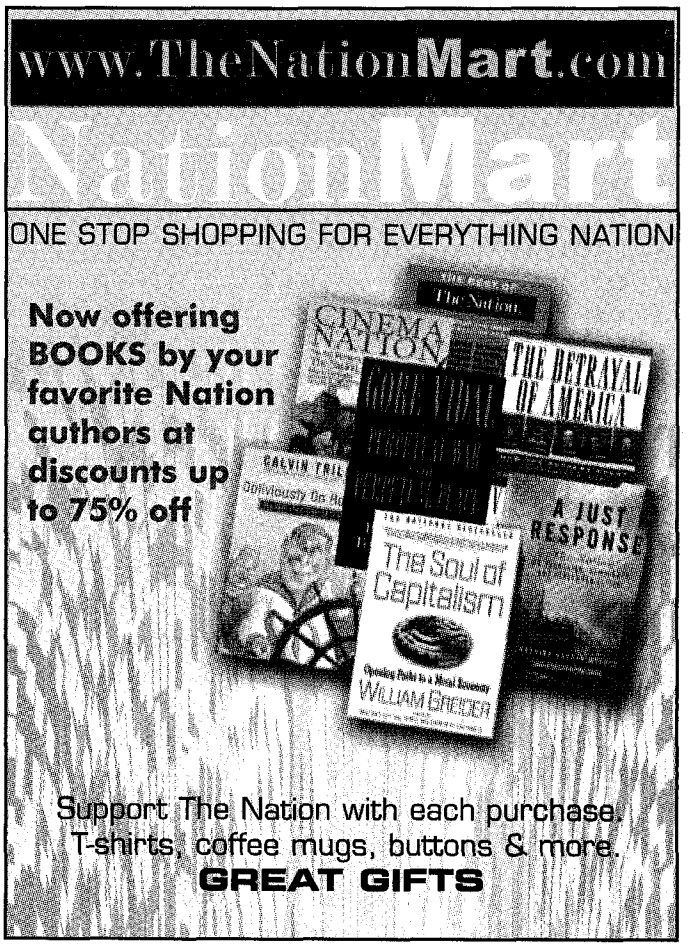
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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

First the Lying, Then the Pardon

When he announced the indictment of Scooter Libby, Vice President Cheney's chief of staff, special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald included a homily on the importance of truth. And in truth it sounded a bit quaint, like someone trying to recite the Sermon on the Mount on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. But of course Fitzgerald was right. When lying becomes the accepted currency, you haven't got the rule of law but a criminal conspiracy.

All governments lie, but Ronald Reagan and his crew raised the bar. From about 1978 on, when the drive to put Reagan in the White House gathered speed, lying was the standard mode for Reagan, his handlers and a press quite happy to retail all the bilge, from the Soviet Union's supposed military superiority to the millionaire welfare queens on Chicago's South Side The press went along with it. Year after year, on the campaign trail and then in the White House, the press corps reported Reagan's news conferences without remarking that the Commander in Chief dwelt mostly in a twilit world of comic-book fables and old movie clips.

Lying about Reagan's frail grip on reality was only part of the journalistic surrender. For those who see Judith Miller's complicity in the lying sprees of the neocons as a signal of the decline of the *New York Times* from some previous plateau of objectivity and competence, I suggest a review of its sometime defense correspondent Richard Burt in the late Carter years, as Al Haig's agent in place. Burt relayed truckloads of threat-inflating nonsense about the military balance in the cold war, particularly in the European theater, most of it on a level of fantasy matching the lies Miller got from Chalabi's disinformers and trundled into print. When the Reaganites seized power in 1981, Burt promptly threw down his press badge and went to work in the State Department as Director of Politico-Military Affairs, a post previously held by another former *Times* man, Leslie Gelb, no garden rose but not a two-timer on the order of Burt.

Many of the associates of Libby and of his boss, now threatened by Fitzgerald, are veterans of that Reagan culture and hardened survivors of the crisis that ultimately threatened several of them with legal sanction and lengthy terms in prison. That crisis was the Iran/*contra* scandal, which burst upon the nation October 6, 1986—the day Eugene Hasenfus successfully parachuted from a CIA-piloted plane illegally shuttling arms to the *contras*.

Special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh, a federal judge from Oklahoma City, began his investigation. In the probe that stretched through the rest of Reagan-time and the entire presidency of G.H.W. Bush, Walsh made his most effective headway by bringing charges for lying to Congress. This is how he nailed Caspar Weinberger, Elliott Abrams, Duane "Dewey" Clarridge, Alan Fiers, Clair George and Robert McFarlane. They all either pleaded guilty to what Libby was just indicted for—obstruction of justice and making false statements—or were convicted of same.

As Walsh plowed forward, those trying to protect Reagan and Bush included Stephen Hadley, a long-time Cheney sidekick now possibly in Fitzgerald's line of fire as the current President's National Security Adviser. In the Iran/*contra* era Hadley was counsel to the Special Review Board, known as the Tower Commission, established by Reagan to inquire into US arms sales to Iran, which headed off any unwelcome focus on Reagan's or Bush's complicity in the scandal. Meanwhile in the House, Representative Dick Cheney was the ranking Republican on a committee also investigating Iran/*contra*. He played a major role in stopping the probe from staining Bush or Reagan.

By fall 1992 Walsh was closing in on Bush for his role in *contra*gate as Reagan's Vice President. Days before the 1992 election Walsh re-indicted Weinberger, Reagan's Defense Secretary, for lying to Congress. The trial was scheduled for January 1993. Walsh was expected to grill Weinberger about notes that implicated Bush. In the line of fire, too, was Colin Powell, who had been Weinberger's assistant in the crucial year 1985. Walsh was also planning to question Bush about his failure to turn over a diary he'd kept in the mid-1980s. We could have seen a former President indicted for obstruction of justice and making false statements.

The press was mostly against Walsh. There were plenty of nasty articles about the cost and duration of his probe. Bush felt politically safe covering his own ass and that of his co-conspirators by issuing pardons, which he duly did, on Christmas Eve 1992. Off Walsh's hook slipped Weinberger, Abrams, Clarridge, George, Fiers and McFarlane. Walsh said furiously that "the Iran/*contra* coverup, which has continued for more than six years, has now been completed."

Will history come close to repeating itself? John Dean, White House counsel in Nixon time and knowledgeable about executive coverups, argues that Fitzgerald has Cheney in his sights and may be planning to charge him under the Espionage Act for revealing Plame's name. Cheney's survival depends on Libby keeping his mouth shut and taking the fall until Christmas Eve 2008, when Bush Jr. issues the necessary pardon or pardons.

Already in the wake of Libby's indictment the air has been thick with talk of pardons, as though it's now become a predictable ritual for incumbent Presidents to clear their subordinates of indictments or convictions for crimes committed during government service. Fitzgerald should say that anyone seriously urging pardons may risk indictment for conspiracy to obstruct justice.

Such pardons go hand in hand with the lying Fitzgerald denounced. If officials violating the law and lying about it know with certainty that they are going to escape legal sanction, then we no longer have a government. We have a sequence of criminal conspiracies. There have been scandalous pardons down the decades, but, as with lying, the Reagan years raised the bar. It should become a major political issue. Clinton didn't dare spring neocon martyr Jonathan Pollard, given a life sentence in 1987 for spying for Israel. Pressure counts. Otherwise Fitzgerald will be wasting our time and the people's money. ■

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KATHA POLLITT

The World According to Dowd

Maureen Dowd doesn't read my column. I know this because in her new book, *Are Men Necessary?*, she uncritically cites virtually every fear-mongering, backlash-promoting study, survey, article and book I've debunked in this space. She falls for that 1986 Harvard-Yale study comparing women's chances of marrying after 40 to the likelihood of being killed by a terrorist, and for the half-baked theories of Sylvia Ann Hewlett (ambitious women stay single or childless), Lisa Belkin (mothers give up their careers), Louise Story (even undergraduates understand this now) and other purveyors of the view that achievement and romance/family are incompatible for women. To be fair, Dowd apparently doesn't read Susan Faludi or Susan Douglas either, or *The American Prospect*, *Slate*, *Salon* or even *The New Republic*, home of her friend Leon Wieseltier, much thanked for editorial help in her introduction—all of which have published persuasive critiques of these and other contributions to backlash lit. Still, it hurts. I read her, after all. We all do.

Are Men Necessary? is a Feminism Is Dead polemic, put through a Dowdian styleblender. Like her *New York Times* column, it's funny and free-associative and not afraid of self-contradiction, full of one-liners and puns: Women who let men grab the check are "fem-freeloading" a "quid profiterole" (ouch). Like her column, too, it's heavy on media fluff: silly trend stories, women's magazine features and interviews with editors of same, dubious gender-difference studies. It's annoying to read pronouncements about feminism based mostly on chats with her friends in the media about men, clothes, TV shows and Botox. Why not call up some people who actually do feminist work?

Dowd sees young women dashing back to the 1950s as fast as their Manolos will carry them: making a bestseller of *The Rules*, changing their names when they marry, obsessing about their looks. There were moments when I felt Dowd and I live on different planets—is pay inequity really now dismissively referred to as "girl money"? Are young women in search of boyfriends really "cultivating the venerable tricks of the trade: an absurdly charming little laugh, a pert toss of the head, an air of saucy triumph"? The young women I know—most of whom, contrary to stereotype, have no problem calling themselves feminists—are so far ahead of where I was at their age, so much more confident and multicompetent and worldly-wise, I only wish I could hire one to renegotiate my girl-money salary for me.

But glamorous gams, trademark dyed red hair and all, Dowd at least gets it that the problem today isn't that old-school feminists once frowned on Barbie. She doesn't applaud today's retro/raunch gender politics as the return of sanity and fun. And it's hard to deny that there's a reality out there of which she gives a slapdash, cartoon, Style-section version. There is some truth to Dowd's horrified depiction of the hypersexualized culture of "hotness" vividly described in Ariel Levy's much-discussed polemic *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture.* (Dowd mentions a piece by Levy in her book; Levy's lovestruck profile of Dowd—it mentions that red hair nine times!—made the cover of *New York.*) Eating disorders, breast implants, stripper chic, Queen for a Day weddings, the resurgence of "girl" and "chick"—it's not a happy story.

But these troubling cultural trends aren't the whole story either. How many young women flash their breasts for the camera or flog themselves academically all the way to the Ivy League merely to snag a rich husband? More than minor in women's studies, volunteer for rape-crisis hotlines, have black belts in karate or PhDs in physics or raise Macedonian sheepdogs? Do we know that more women want the man to pay the bill than want to share it or, if that's too mechanical, work out some other arrangement that feels equal? It's a myth that my generation and Dowd's were a unified band of sisters, forging ahead in our sneakers and power suits. By many measures young women today are far more independent than we were—more likely to finish college and have advanced degrees, to work in formerly all-male occupations, to have (or acknowledge having) lesbian sex, to refuse to suffer in silence rape, harassment, abuse. If we're going by anecdotal evidence from our circles of friends, I know young women who've made the finals in the Intel science contest and worked on newspapers in Africa, who've had sperm-bank babies alone or with other women, who play rugby, make movies, write feminist/political/literary blogs, organize unions, raise money for poor women's abortions.

"You're always so glass-half-full in public," my editor says at this point. "But in private you're as down as Dowd." Well, not quite that down. But yes, I thought we'd be further along by now. I feel for young women today—somehow, between the irony and the knowingness and the 24/7 bath in pop celebrity culture and its repulsive values, it can be harder for them than it was for us to call a sexist spade a spade. They've been bombarded from birth with consumerism and Republicanism and hyperindividualism, and told in every possible way that feminism is deeply uncool and unhot. Dowd is such a credulous audience for backlash propaganda it doesn't occur to her that she is promoting, not reporting, the problem she describes. I'm amazed, actually, that feminism is still around, given the press it gets.

Dowd, for example, thinks feminism may be a "cruel hoax" because it keeps women single—men are scared of spunky, successful women. (In interviews Dowd denies she's attributing her own unmated state to her fame and fabulousness, but that's how she's been read.) Well, some men definitely want the young compliant type. But—anecdotal evidence again—most women in my circle are paired, and we are all feminists and really, really great. Men hold a lot of cards in the mating game, but fewer than they used to, and women hold more than before. There has never been a better time in all world history to be a 53-year-old single woman looking for romance. Besides, as ferocious young Jessica Valenti put it over at Feministing.com, "Feminism isn't a f***ing dating service." Out of the mouths of babes. ■

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ARTICLES

CORNBREAD and ROSES

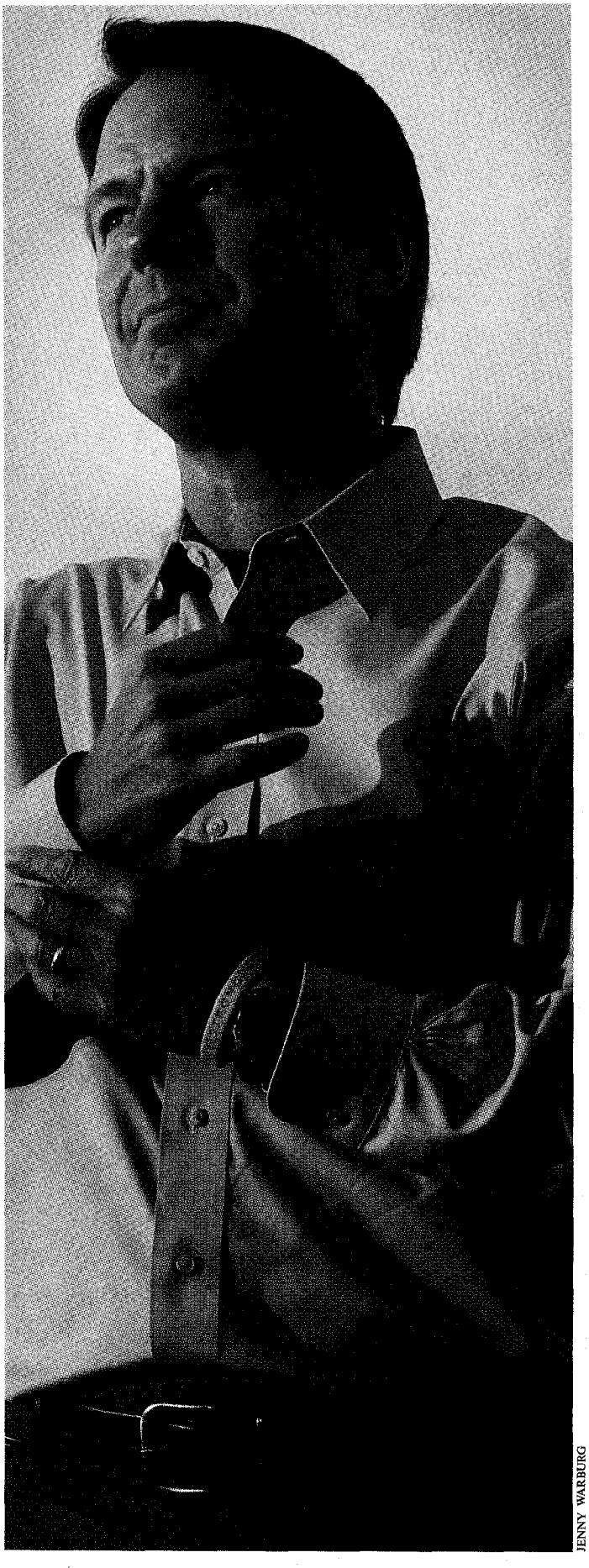
BOB MOSER

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

On a soft gray Monday in mid-October, the Interfaith Council shelter in downtown Chapel Hill has a brand-new volunteer, brimming with enthusiasm that's almost annoying at 10:15 in the morning. "How're you all doing back there?" John Edwards calls out to the kitchen crew as he beams into the dining room, trailed by a clutch of staffers, University of North Carolina antipoverty activists and TV cameras. While he chats up the shelter volunteers and residents, alternately squinting his perma-tanned face with concern and flashing the yard-wide smile that almost won Iowa, two white-haired women on the kitchen crew, both named Jane, are nudged toward him for a souvenir shot. "I want this picture for *me*," Edwards says with his best Sunday school charm, hugging the women under his arms. After a bit more chatting and hugging, there's a momentary lull. Hands on hips, with mock impatience, Edwards tilts toward the kitchen and hollers out, "So am I supposed to do something or *what*?"

"Well, we've got some unloading," offers Paul Eberhardt, the day shelter coordinator. Quick as a flash, last year's Democratic nominee for Vice President is back in the pantry, tearing cans of generic lima beans and tomatoes out of their plastic-wrapped cardboard while Eberhardt feeds him an earful of insights from the front lines of poverty-fighting. "Lately we're getting hospital workers, construction workers, here at lunchtime," Eberhardt says, talking fast. "It's low employment now, not just unemployment." Edwards purses his lips, furrows his brow, gives every sign of listening, even as he briskly moves on to filling up water pitchers, smiling on cue for the local affiliates until it's time to clap his hands and cry out to his staff, "What's next?"

Around this time last year, a lot of people were asking that very same question about Edwards. After his cometlike ascent from first-term senator to the national Democratic ticket, Edwards crashed to earth when he failed to persuade running mate John Kerry to contest George W. Bush's questionable victory in Ohio. Suddenly, Edwards's giddy three-year campaign to lift himself into the political stratosphere—and knit together the "two Americas" he dearly loved to preach about—was over. His wife, Elizabeth, had been diagnosed with breast cancer. His Senate seat, which Edwards had abandoned to focus on the national race, would return to Republican hands in January, leaving him without a built-in mechanism for staying in the national spotlight. For the first time in his adult life, this blue-skies optimist was staring straight into a blank horizon. Friends and admirers offered advice and speculated: Would he return to his law practice? Start a foreign-policy think tank to shore up his presidential résumé? Run for governor? Cash in on his connections with some Dan Quayle–style consultancies?



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In February Edwards surprised them all, announcing a campaign to "eradicate poverty in America." With a $40,000 annual salary paid by private funds, Edwards became the first director of the Center on Poverty, Work and Opportunity at UNC, Chapel Hill's law school, largely a think tank designed to bring antipoverty scholars, activists, journalists and politicians together to cook up innovative ways to tackle economic and racial inequities. Edwards is also putting some of his ideas into action, including the College for Everyone program he promised in 2004. In low-income Greene County Edwards this summer announced a pilot program to pay for the first year of college for local high school graduates willing to work at least ten hours a week.

Since launching the center, Edwards has returned to perpetual motion, taking his antipoverty crusade to more than thirty states. Between visits to shelters and job-training centers and delivering his new stump speech, full of ringing challenges to view poverty as "the great moral cause of our time," Edwards has raised more than $4 million for Democratic legislative candidates in mostly red states, trying, as he says, "to build the party back from the ground up." He's teaming with unlikely partners on the left—including local AFL-CIO, ACORN and NAACP chapters—in campaigns to raise the minimum wage in Ohio, Arizona and Michigan. He's praising Big Labor's historic role in "lifting millions of Americans out of poverty." And he's floating serious—and surprisingly liberal—proposals to put his high-flown rhetoric into action. He's touting a controversial "cultural integration" plan to give low-income families housing vouchers to move into better neighborhoods. He's calling for expansions to Bill Clinton's earned-income tax credits, for concerted crackdowns on predatory lenders, and for "work bonds" to help low-income workers build savings and assets. He wants not only to repeal Bush's tax cuts for the wealthiest 1 percent but also to raise capital-gains taxes for those on the top rungs. After Hurricane Katrina he spoke pointedly about how "the face of poverty in America is the face of color" and promoted an ambitious Gulf Coast recovery program modeled on FDR's Works Progress Administration—a touchstone for the kind of big-government liberalism that the old Edwards (like most Democratic leaders today) wouldn't have touched with a ten-foot pole.

Edwards drowns those 'insincerity' and 'shallowness' whispers in a sea of noble intentions and proposals, but the old doubts persist.

All of which raises a question: Who is this guy—and what has he done with the centrist New Democrat who once had Karl Rove quaking in his boots? While he clearly hasn't lost his all-too-palpable lust for the White House, Edwards has largely left behind the Clintonian emphasis on "personal responsibility" and "fiscal restraint" that often struck a hollow note in his campaign speeches—particularly in contrast to his heartfelt cry of "two Americas." The metamorphosis began during the last campaign, when Edwards gradually found his voice as an economic populist. Less than a decade into his political career, he remains a work in progress.

"We might be seeing the kind of transformation Bobby Kennedy underwent," says Pete MacDowell, a veteran grassroots organizer and staunch Edwards critic ("a political Ken doll with a populist streak" is how MacDowell describes him) who runs the NC Progressive Democrats PAC. "After he initially supported Vietnam and went slow on civil rights, Kennedy developed a moral core and turned into the kind of Democrat we haven't seen since. I never thought I'd say this, but maybe that's what we're now seeing with Edwards. Maybe this is his core."

However implausible the RFK comparison might sound, it's hard to deny it on this mid-October Monday in Chapel Hill, when Edwards—fresh from the shelter—shimmers onto the stage of UNC's Great Hall at lunchtime, soaking up Beatles-esque roars of adulation from an overflow crowd of students. It's the first stop on a ten-campus national tour, Opportunity Rocks, where Edwards will urge thousands of students to fight poverty. Even with an unsexy message, the messenger will draw crowds that surprise even his organizers—1,500 at the University of California, Berkeley, more than 2,000 at the University of Michigan.

Edwards doesn't disappoint his young fans. Like his hero, Kennedy, he has a knack for talking about life-and-death struggles, laying bare the challenges of blue-collar folks struggling to make ends meet but leaving his audience more challenged and inspired than depressed. Reminding students of their forebears' campaigns against the Vietnam War and South African apartheid, Edwards throws down the gauntlet: "These folks need a champion—and not just me. They need *you*. You can make ending poverty in America the cause of your generation. It's the right thing to do. This is not about charity—it's about justice!"

"I never thought I'd see this many kids coming to listen to a speech about poverty," UNC senior Josh Glasser gushed in the glowing wake left by Edwards as he jetted off to his next gig. Last year Glasser co-founded SPROUT, a campus group helping low-income locals apply for earned-income tax credits. Edwards's speech at UNC, where Glasser and co-founder James Jolley handed out SPROUT fliers, brought sixty-five new students to the group's listserv in just the first day. "We met with the senator and his staff and they really listened, really wanted to help," Glasser says. "It wasn't some top-down thing—they wanted to hear our ideas. I know some people are cynical about him using this to position himself for President. But come on: We all know poverty's not exactly a get-'em-to-the-polls kind of issue. He's convinced me, at least, that he means it." For Edwards, that's one down—and just a few dozen million more skeptics to go.

Johnny Reid Edwards shot onto the national political stage in 2001, at a moment when Democrats were still gagging on the bitter dregs of Al Gore's defeat—and dreaming fond dreams of the next Bill Clinton. And here, by God, he seemed to be: a jovial moderate, even handsomer than Clinton, saying smart, empathetic things about "regular people" in a soft Dixie drawl. Like Clinton, Edwards had risen to glory from practically nothing, the kind of rags-to-riches legend that has made voters swoon since the days of Andy Jackson. Best of all, he came without Clinton's personal baggage. Even the notorious smear campaigners at the North Carolina Republican Party could dredge up nothing damning on Edwards during his upset of Republican Senator Lauch Faircloth in 1998—nothing beyond the indisput-

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able fact that he had, for twenty years, been successfully suing big corporations on behalf of those "regular people," piling up millions in the process as one of America's top trial attorneys.

In his three years as a senator, Edwards had hardly had time to knock anybody's socks off. He'd impressed hard-bitten Washingtonians when he deposed key witnesses in Clinton's impeachment trial and delivered a closing defense argument—and again when he led a winning fight, joining Senators McCain and Kennedy, for the Patients' Bill of Rights. But there were whispers of shallowness, callowness, naked opportunism. And almost as soon as he'd kindled the hopes of forlorn Democrats, more serious doubts began to surface.

Democrats had seen both Clinton and Jimmy Carter campaign as power-to-the-people populists and then govern more like Nixon than Roosevelt. Edwards's affiliation with the Democratic Leadership Council, founded in the mid-1980s to demolish the party's old "liberal fundamentalism," reinforced the suspicion that he was just another big talker from Dixie with a conservative core. It didn't help when Clinton, the old snake-oil master himself, admiringly commented that Edwards could "charm an owl out of a tree." Worse, throughout 2002 and 2003 Edwards gave policy speeches—crafted in part by DLC policy guru Bruce Reed—that made him sound exactly like what cynics had taken to calling him: Clinton Lite. "The American people don't want us to tear down America's corporations," he declared in a talk called "Putting Responsibility First." In one healthcare speech Edwards repeated the word "responsibility" twenty-eight times. Outlining his tax-policy proposals Edwards came off like a Clinton puppet, mouthing the mantra "opportunity, responsibility, hard work."

'Republicans use big things to divide America. I think we can use big things to unite America.'
—John Edwards

Out of the other side of his mouth, however, Edwards talked with candor and gut-level understanding about economic, racial and class inequities. "How long had it been since you heard a Democrat utter the word poverty?" says Chris Kromm, executive director of the progressive Institute for Southern Studies. "And who would have thought they'd hear a Democrat from the South making workers' rights a central campaign theme?" Edwards's refusal to speak ill of his Democratic opponents also struck a fresh tone. Progressives remained skeptical, but they couldn't completely tune Edwards out—except for one not-so-little thing.

"I can give you the exact date," says Kromm. "September 19, 2002." In that day's *Washington Post* Edwards wrote an op-ed headlined "Congress Must Be Clear," staking himself out as the Democrat most gung-ho to sic the troops on Saddam Hussein. Swallowing the WMD story hook, line and sinker, Edwards commanded his fellow senators to "send a clear message to Iraq and the world: America is united in its determination to eliminate forever the threat of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction." Though he made obligatory noises about "an effort to rally the international community" and "real steps to win the peace" before invading, Edwards threw himself fully behind the Congressional resolution to authorize Bush's go-it-alone invasion of Iraq.

"Either he was a hawk, or he didn't know what he was talking about, or he was guilty of the worst kind of political pandering," Kromm says. "I thought, 'You're trying to appeal to progressives, but you've already lost them.' I'm not sure he ever recovered from that."

In an interview after the UNC speech, Edwards finally utters the words he'd assiduously avoided during the last campaign: "I voted for the resolution," he says. "It was a mistake." So far, so good. But he goes on, "The hard question is, What do you do now? Looking back, it's easy to say that it was wrong and based on false information. Anybody who doesn't admit that isn't honest, and that's the truth." So what now? "I myself feel conflicted about it," Edwards replies. "But we have to find ways—and I don't mean just yanking all the troops tomorrow—but we have to find ways to start bringing our troops home. Our presence there is clearly contributing to the problem." So does he agree with Senator Russ Feingold that Washington should set a withdrawal deadline? "No. Even if we're going to say that internally, that we're gonna have our troops out by X date, there's no reason to announce that to the world. I think that's probably a mistake." He doesn't agree, either, with Senator Clinton's call for more US troops to finish the job? "No sir!" Edwards says, sitting straight up in his chair. "Did she really say that?"

Edwards steadfastly declines to revisit the last campaign. "If you don't mind," he says, "I'd rather talk about the future." But as he touts his antipoverty crusade and dissects the morass Democrats find themselves mired in, it is clear that Edwards has done some hard thinking about the lessons of 2004—and about the political opportunity that presented itself in the terrible wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Lesson One: Stop thinking small. "I think in our effort to be elected, we've become minimalists, tinkering around the edges—Our tax cut is better than yours, or, We'll give you smaller class sizes," he says. "That's not what the country wants. We've got to give the American people something big and important to be unified by. Republicans use big things to divide America. I think we can use big things to unite America."

Chief among those "big things," clearly, is an all-out effort to conquer poverty. "Both sides bear responsibility for what's happened," he says. "During the Great Depression with Franklin Roosevelt, during the 1960s with Lyndon Johnson's great War on Poverty and Bobby Kennedy going through Appalachia—we were the party that led the fight against poverty in this country. We've got to show some backbone and stand up for the folks who are struggling. We've done it in the past, but it's been a while."

Which brings us to Lesson Two: Democrats can't afford to keep ceding the "values vote." Here again, Edwards sees his antipoverty crusade as a step in the right direction. "In a country of our wealth, to have 37 million people living in poverty? It's a huge moral issue," he says. "There's a hunger in this country for a sense of national community, that we're not in this thing by ourselves. There's been a long period of selfish thinking. I think there's a great opportunity for us to be about a big, moral cause that's bigger than people's own self-interest."

But will that message fly among the evangelical voters who've twice put George W. Bush over the top? "Shoot," says Edwards.

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"I could go right now to just about any church in Alabama or Georgia and speak about poverty, and I know people will respond." Ferrel Guillory, a longtime political reporter who now runs the UNC Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life, says that might be—in typical Edwards fashion—a bit too optimistic. "Edwards is not going to appeal to the religious right," Guillory says. "But he could make a strong appeal to 'values voters' who are not hard-core conservatives."

Steve Jarding, the rural strategist who set fundraising records running Edwards's PAC in 2002 before leaving the campaign in frustration, thinks his moral spin on the "two Americas" message has real potential in Middle America. "Let's face it: There are millions of families sitting down at the table tonight, parents working two or three jobs and struggling to survive. Are they sitting there saying, Thank God two gay people aren't getting married? or, I'm so glad the girl down the street can't get an abortion? That's not what's tearing their families apart. If Edwards will stand up and tell them that, he could change the turf."

JENNY WARBURG

Lesson Three is also about changing the turf: Democrats, who've now lost every state in the nation's largest region in two straight elections, have to take their message south. "Look," Edwards says, "the fact is, if you lose the whole South, you've got almost no margin of error in the rest of the country. But it's more than that. We have to make it clear we've got a vision for the whole country, not just blue states."

Edwards won't criticize his 2004 running mate, Kerry, who declared even before the Democratic primaries that he believed a Democrat could win without going south—and then tried to make good on that belief, pulling Democratic national money, along with the Southerner he tapped for Vice President, out of every Southern state but Florida. Bush ended up winning every Southern state—except Edwards's North Carolina—by a larger margin than in 2000. "If you were in a state like Alabama last year," Edwards acknowledges, "you didn't hardly know we were running."

Conventional wisdom says that an antipoverty, pro-labor campaign would be approximately as popular in the South as William Tecumseh Sherman (or Senator Kerry). But the new-model John Edwards is all about flouting conventional Democratic thinking. And Guillory, for one, believes economic populism can work in Dixie as textile mills and furniture factories continue to close down. "There's a heightened awareness of economic peril and dislocation in the South, resulting from shifts in the job market," he says. "There's a greater awareness that the affluence and growth has not been evenly distributed, that it's been a kind of creative destruction—creating and destroying at the same time."

But Edwards has to broaden his focus beyond poverty to make his populist message a winner at the polls. "It's not just about the poor," says Pete MacDowell. "Where is he on healthcare, jobs policy, urban policy, immigration, creating jobs with alternative energy sources—all these issues where the Democrats have just been saying and doing zero?"

Edwards says his New America Initiative will address the middle-class squeeze as well as poverty. But he thinks the key to Southern votes involves something that transcends policy positions. "These are the kinds of people that respond to strength and leadership," he says. "They want leaders who have the backbone to stand up for something. We're not Republicans. When we try to be some lighter version of what we are, which is what happens over and over, it's devastating to Democrats. Why would they choose us?"

For Democrats looking to 2008, of course, the question is somewhat different: Why choose Edwards? For all the cogency of his diagnosis of what ails the Democrats, and all the undeniable passion of his antipoverty campaign, even Edwards's admirers wonder whether he's chosen the right pilot program for "thinking big again." And even as he drowns those "insincerity" and "shallowness" whispers in a sea of noble intentions and bright proposals, Edwards still manages to revive the old, stubborn doubts.

Just before the Opportunity Rocks tour took flight, BusinessWeek Online broke the news that Edwards, who had been vowing to "pour everything I've got into this cause," had been hired as a "global consultant" for Fortress Investment Group, a global asset-management firm. So while he set out to inspire college students, Edwards found himself answering a fresh batch of hard questions. "This is another thing that I'm doing that'll take a relatively small amount of time," he protested after the UNC speech. "It's an opportunity for me to explore sort of what's happening with the global economy." Asked another hard question—Is it realistic to talk about "eradicating" poverty?—Edwards resorts to pie-in-the-sky. "Of *course* it's realistic," he says, flashing an incredulous look. "It's completely realistic. I don't see the eradication of poverty here in this country as this huge, mammoth thing."

Edwards is far more persuasive when asked whether his antipoverty campaign is just a political tool. "Look, to be honest, it's all very personal for me. I've seen everything, been everything, from poor to lower middle class, then regular middle class and then just skyrocketing, you know, when I was a lawyer. What happened to me is that I started thinking as I got older about this. I saw some of the people I'd grown up with going the other way, getting in trouble, having a really terrible time getting by. These were my friends when I was growing up and here I was, doing great. It was no great policy revelation, just a sense that something was wrong, that, Why am I the one who's gotten the good luck and they didn't?"

While Edwards insists that his latest campaign "ought to be nonpartisan," its success in keeping him in the national limelight will determine whether he can make a viable charge at Hillary Clinton in 2008. In one recent poll Clinton led the likely pack of Democratic contenders with 42 percent; Edwards was a distant second at 14. "I wouldn't put much stock in that, though," says Ferrel Guillory. "For all you read about Hillary Clinton, she's not scaring away contenders. She's going to lead in the polls right up till the primaries start, because she's the celebrity. But the people making her out to be inevitable are Republicans.

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They'd love nothing better, especially in the South."

Edwards has a leg up in a survey that may mean more. According to a Pew Center poll released in late October, his favorability rating among Democrats not only bests Hillary's, 68 to 59 percent, but even that of the original Clinton, Bill, who stands at 64. And while John Kerry's unfavorable rating is a sad 48 percent among the Democrats who just last year nominated him for President, Edwards's "unfavorable" is easily the lowest, at 32—and the survey showed he's the best liked, and least loathed, among Republicans and independents, too.

Up against Clinton II's New Democratic moderation, Edwards might end up grappling with a once-unthinkable perception of him as—ye gods!—an old-style liberal, more worried about the plight of poor black folk than struggling white folk. "His message has to make sense to middle-class voters," says Guillory. "He has to have the 'moral values' component, but he also has to be hardheaded. To be effective in terms of politics and poverty, you have to come at it counterintuitively. Clinton did that."

The time could be ripe for an economic populism that goes beyond Clinton's piecemeal approach. "Circumstances beyond John's control may have elevated his central issue of poverty to where it can catapult him politically," says Steve Jarding. "Those images from New Orleans, not unlike when the planes hit the towers in New York—they'll be seared into people's minds for a while. America was embarrassed by it. We've been told for so long that the government is the enemy. Now people see that we need it; it's just not working."

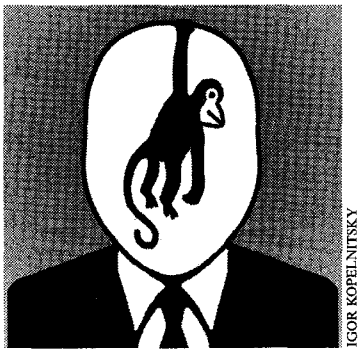
Edwards's great challenge, finally, may be convincing the skeptical millions that he's the one who can make things work. "He's raised poverty to a presidential-level conversation for the first time in forty years," says Guillory. "You've got to give him credit for that. And given the shallowness of his experience in politics, the way he vaulted right over the lower rungs of the ladder—it's an amazing story. But now that he's there, he's got to do more than make us laugh and make us cry. He's got to paint a clearer picture of where he's going to take the country." ■

A PUSH TO TEACH CREATIONISM IN SCHOOL DIVIDES A SMALL PENNSYLVANIA TOWN.

Darwin on Trial

EYAL PRESS

One evening in late September, roughly 150 people filed into the fire hall in Dover, Pennsylvania, to attend a presentation on evolution. The event's organizer was Jim Grove, a minister from nearby Loganville who views the Bible as the revealed word of God and, like many people in this part of Pennsylvania, believes the answer to the question of life's origins begins and ends with the Book of Genesis.



IGOR KOPELNITSKY

"I'm not opposed to teaching evolution in public schools," Grove, a greyhound-thin man dressed in a neatly pressed suit and leather boots, explained as spectators settled in around the tables in the room. "But I don't think you want it taught with a bunch of lies." To that end, Grove played a video, *Why Evolution Is Stupid*, narrated by Kent Hovind, a former high school science teacher who several years ago opened a creationist theme park in Pensacola, Florida, called Dinosaur Adventure Land. In the video Hovind performs a sort of creationist comedy routine, standing onstage before a live audience and jokingly contrasting the absurdity of evolution with the plainly more sensible view in Scripture. "Who's ever seen a Big Bang create order?" he asks. "The Bible said God made the stars, plain and simple."

The theme seemed to go over well among the spectators in the fire hall, a number of whom chuckled as Hovind delivered his punch lines and, afterward, gave the video a thumbs-up. "I think it's extremely well done," Judy Grim, a 60-year-old woman in jeans and a light-blue T-shirt, told me; two friends standing next to her nodded in agreement. Reverend Grove announced that anyone interested could purchase a copy of the video for $9.95. He also fielded some questions, including one from a woman in back who wanted to know why the American Civil Liberties Union went to such lengths to stop the truth from being exposed when communities challenged the teaching of evolution in public schools. Grove explained that the ACLU was "basically a humanistic organization" with "the contacts to bring in the high-powered people" whenever the status quo was under threat.

The specter of the ACLU bringing in high-powered people to thwart a community's efforts to prevent young people from being brainwashed by evolution is not an idle one in Dover. That very week, in a packed courtroom twenty miles away in Harrisburg, the opening arguments were being heard in *Kitzmiller et al. v. Dover*, a federal trial pitting eleven residents of this quiet community in south-central Pennsylvania against the local school board, which in October 2004 voted 6 to 3 to revise the biology curriculum so that students "will be made aware of gaps/problems in Darwin's theory and of other theories of evolution including, but not limited to, intelligent design."

With that step Dover became the first community in the country to introduce intelligent design—which organizations like the National Academy of Sciences have dismissed as a form of creationism—into the public school curriculum. The trend appears to be catching on: As the *Washington Post* reported earlier this year, buoyed by the endorsement of politicians like Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum and George W. Bush,

Eyal Press is a Nation *contributing writer.*

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both of whom have suggested the jury is still out on the science of evolution, nineteen states are currently weighing proposals that challenge Darwin's theory. Among them is Kansas, where the Board of Education just adopted a remarkable new standard redefining science so it is not limited to natural explanations.

It is the latest chapter in the seemingly never-ending battle over an issue many people thought had been settled decades ago, after the famous 1925 "Scopes monkey trial" in Dayton, Tennessee. In Europe and the rest of the Western world, of course, the debate about evolution has been settled. Not, however, in the United States, where religious fundamentalists, aware that efforts to incorporate creationism into biology classrooms have been struck down in court, have refined their approach. In Dover and elsewhere, opponents of evolution now speak more benignly of "teaching the controversy," as proponents of intelligent design like to put it—that is, alerting students to purported flaws in Darwin's theory and exposing them to alternative views, even though in the scientific community there is no controversy about evolution.

As in so many other areas of the culture wars, the shift in emphasis has enabled Christian activists to portray themselves as the victims of a high-powered liberal establishment that simply won't allow other voices to be heard—and to deflect attention from their own religious motivations. Proponents of intelligent design take pains to avoid mentioning the word "God" in their work. But there is little doubt that God is on the minds of their grassroots supporters. A few days before the meeting at the fire hall, Reverend Grove told me he favored "a balanced view of science" and the principle of "academic freedom." Then he said of the Dover school board's action, "This is a crack in the dam of evolution.... The teaching of evolution takes you somewhere—it leads you to atheism."

There was one person at the Dover fire hall who challenged this view, a bespectacled man named Burt Humburg who raised his hand during the question period to say, "I think that it is possible to believe in God and also to understand evolution." Humburg had gone to the meeting to pass out literature critical of intelligent design, a gesture that might lead you to peg him as an outsider from a very different world. Yet, as I discovered when I met with him a few days later, Humburg is no stranger to fundamentalism. "I know that language very well," he said of the video that had been shown in Dover and of the discussion afterward. Originally from Kansas, Humburg grew up in a devout evangelical household, attending what he described as a "charismatic holy-rolling church," speaking in tongues and learning that the answer to everything, including the story of how the universe formed, is in the Bible. "I used to send money to the Institute of Creation Research," he told me. As he grew older, however, Humburg developed a love of science, and the more he learned, the more he came to feel that the Bible is not, in fact, a biology textbook. His junior year in college, he joined Kansas Citizens for Science, an organization that challenged the Board of Education's attack on evolution. Now an internist completing his residency in internal medicine at Penn State University, Humburg has been watching the battle replay in central Pennsylvania.

In Humburg's view, it is a mistake to dismiss creationists as ignorant rubes, the way H.L. Mencken famously did at the

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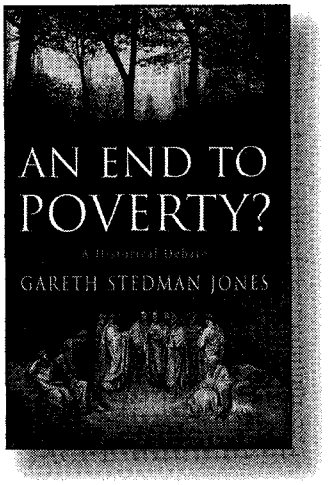

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Scopes trial. What motivates them is not a lack of intelligence, Humburg suggested, but fear—the fear that everything they have been raised to believe will come crashing down if they or their children are taught to acknowledge the authority of anything other than Scripture. "The clear implication of what they hear from people like Reverend Grove is that it's either God or evolution," he explained. As he pointed out at the fire hall, members of the Dover community are living proof that faith and science need not be juxtaposed this way. "It's my understanding that the people who are bringing this lawsuit forward are themselves Christians who are very concerned about the move to make certain people's religious misgivings about verified science the public school's approach," he stated.

The comment drew some glares—and an accusation from one woman that Humburg had been "brainwashed"—but it happens to be true. At the trial in Harrisburg, one plaintiff after another took the witness stand to explain that their decision to sue the school board had nothing to do with holding God or people of faith in contempt. Many said they were themselves churchgoing Christians. What offended them was the effort to turn religion against science in a manner that violates the establishment clause of the Constitution and will leave students misinformed and confused.

The intelligent design dust-up can be seen as a tragic illustration of how energy that could be poured into other problems is wasted.

It is not a view that would be appreciated by the current members of the Dover school board, as Carol "Casey" Brown discovered firsthand. I met Brown one afternoon in a parking lot off Route 74, the main road passing through Dover, after she'd offered to give me a tour of the area. We drove out past some cornfields, a sheep farm, a meadow and a couple of barns, along the back roads of York County, a region where between 1970 and 2000, 11 percent of the manufacturing jobs disappeared, and where in the more rural areas one in five children grows up in a low-income family (in the city of York the figure is one in three). Dover isn't dirt poor, but neither is it wealthy. It's the kind of place where people work hard and save what they can. Looking out at the soy, wheat and dairy farms while Brown explained that lots of older people in the area can't afford to keep up with their mortgages and end up walking away from their homes, I was struck by the thought that this was a part of the country where, a century ago, the populist movement might have made inroads by organizing small farmers against the monopolies and trusts. These days, of course, a different sort of populism prevails, infused by religion and defining itself against "outside" forces like the ACLU.

Brown watched this unfold up close. "What happened in Dover is an example of what happened in the last two presidential elections—the evangelical far right really found its voice," she said. While Burt Humburg identified fear as the driving force behind the opposition to evolution, what Brown witnessed among the leaders of the charge was intolerance, particularly at school board meetings that began to seem to her like indoctrination sessions. In a pivotal meeting in June 2004, Bill Buckingham, then head of the school board, announced that the new biology textbook the district was set to purchase, by Kenneth Miller and Joseph Levine, was "laced with Darwinism," adding afterwards, "This country wasn't founded on Muslim beliefs or evolution. This country was founded on Christianity." (At the trial Buckingham denied discussing creationism at the meeting, but witnesses, including two reporters, recall otherwise.)

A week later at another board meeting, Buckingham's wife, Charlotte, read from Genesis and asked, "How can we allow anything else to be taught in our schools?" Science teachers like Bryan Rehm, now one of the plaintiffs suing the board, explained that they could not in good conscience balance evolution with creationism—to no avail. On October 18, 2004, the statement making students aware of intelligent design was adopted 6 to 3. Brown was there, and along with her husband, Jeff, who also served on the school board at the time, she voted no. She also announced her resignation, having grown convinced that the voices of people who did not adopt a particular religious view were no longer valued. Brown herself is a Christian who believes God created the universe, but she had little success convincing her fellow board members that such a view belongs in a comparative religion class, if in school at all. "I shall pray for you all," she announced in her resignation speech, "pray that you will find the wisdom to separate your personal beliefs and desires from the proper fulfillment, within the law, of the duties and responsibilities of your office." Her husband also stepped down. Both told me they have lost friends and found themselves accused of being atheists (neither is). At the trial Brown testified that Alan Bonsell, another board member allied with Buckingham, told her she was "going to hell." Bonsell, who was sitting in front of me, insisted this was "absolutely untrue."

What do the intended beneficiaries of the Dover school board's actions make of the intelligent design debate? A few days before meeting Casey Brown, I drove out to Dover high school to find out. It was late in the afternoon and a couple of kids were milling about outside, waiting for rides. When I asked them what they thought of the controversy, they looked at me with blank stares that suggested I could not have posed a question of less relevance to their lives. "I think you should leave us alone," one of them said. "Everyone just sleeps through that class anyway," said another. I approached a third kid, who was standing alone. Nobody he knew ever talked about the issue, he told me; it was no big deal.

Some students have been affected more directly. In 1998 Zach Strausbaugh, then a senior at Dover High, painted a four-by-sixteen-foot mural for his graduation requirement depicting the ascent of man; two years ago the mural, which included representations of apes, was burned by a school janitor who found it offensive. It is the sort of act one would think a school board would loudly denounce. To the contrary, according to Jeff and Casey Brown, school board members Bill Buckingham and Alan Bonsell told them they believed what the janitor did was right.

For the most part, though, kids in Dover seem perplexed that so much attention is being paid to what happens in a single class. It is a sentiment shared by Pat Jennings, an African-American

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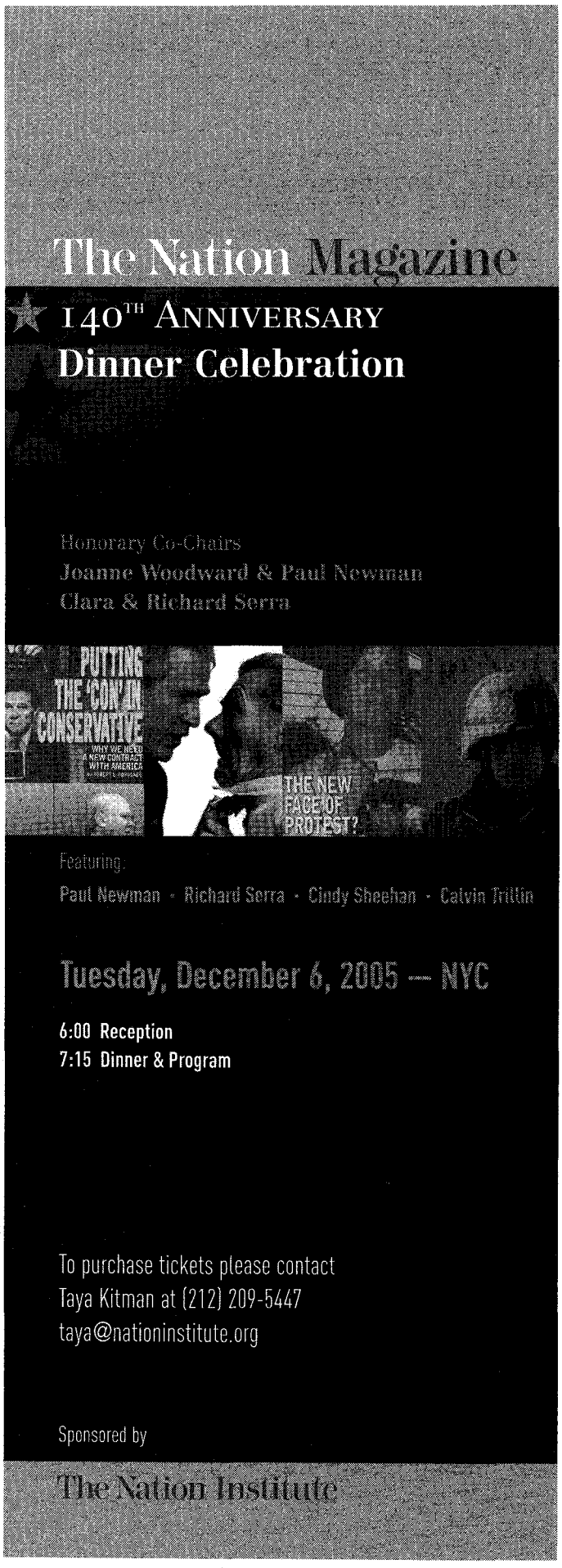
woman who runs the Lighthouse Youth Center, an organization that offers after-school programs, recreational services and parenting and Bible study classes to kids throughout York County. The center, which is privately funded, is located in a brown-brick building in downtown York, next to a church. "Some of the children we serve have a desire to know Christ," Jennings, dressed in a violet shirt and gold hoop earrings, told me. "I would say that's the main reason I'm here." A deeply religious woman who describes her faith as "very important" to her, Jennings nonetheless confessed that she hasn't paid much attention to the evolution controversy, since she's too busy thinking about other problems the children she serves face—drugs, gangs, lack of access to opportunity, racism. "When we are in this building there are no Latinos, blacks, Caucasian children—just children," she explained after giving me a tour of the center. "But when I go out there"—she pointed to the street—"I'm reminded that I'm different."

"There's a lot of kids out there looking for something," Jennings continued. "They have questions that need answering. They're looking for someone to trust." I asked her if she thought schools were providing that thing. She shook her head. "I don't know if it's the schools or the parents or whatever, but something is wrong. The kids I see lack discipline. They lack reading skills." Listening to her, it was hard not to view the dust-up over intelligent design as a tragic illustration of how energy that could be poured into other problems is wasted on symbolic issues of comparatively minor significance.

Why those symbolic issues have assumed such importance in America has a lot to do with the fact that, in places like Dover, the only institutions around that seem willing to address the concerns of many people are fundamentalist churches. Or so it seemed to me after speaking with Judy Grim, the woman who praised the video on evolution shown at the fire hall. When I asked her why she cared so much about the issue, Grim didn't talk about Charles Darwin. She talked about her fear of living in a society driven by selfishness and a "survival of the fittest" mentality. "If I'm taught that there is a God," she explained, "then I know that I'm responsible to meet him one day. If I'm taught that I evolve, then I can live my life as I please. I don't have to answer to anybody, and that's where our society is headed. And that's why we have so many problems."

There was a time when progressives spoke eloquently to such concerns—articulating why, as the historian Richard Hofstadter put it in *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, "there is nothing in nature or a naturalistic philosophy of life to make impossible the acceptance of moral sanctions that can be employed for the common good." At the turn of the twentieth century the dissenters from the crude version of social Darwinism propagated by people like Herbert Spencer included not only reactionary fundamentalists but also ministers who preached the Social Gospel and writers like Henry Demarest Lloyd, who stirringly denounced a society in which "the prize we give the fittest is monopoly of the necessaries of life." It was because of such voices that America turned away from the crass view of society as a random assortment of atomized individuals locked in a brutal struggle for market share toward the currents of thought that fostered the reforms of the Progressive era (ending child labor, cleaning up



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tenement slums) and, eventually, the New Deal.

You won't find many copies of Lloyd's *Wealth Against Commonwealth* in a town like Dover these days. What you will find are places like Harmony Grove Community Church, a large red-brick edifice that Casey Brown pointed to on our drive through the borough. Harmony Grove is where Bill Buckingham worshiped and where he solicited donations so that copies of a book promoting intelligent design, *Of Pandas and People*, could be bought and donated to the high school (Buckingham passed a check for $850 to the father of fellow board member Alan Bonsell, and the donation was made). It is to such "Bible believing" churches that the task of addressing the fears of ordinary Americans has increasingly fallen, in a manner scripted by the religious right. The schools are failing? It's because there's too little talk of God. Crime is rising? It's Charles Darwin's fault. Society is increasingly divided? Blame the ACLU.

The irony is that nothing has divided Dover more than the actions of the school board itself, creating a messy legal battle that has turned an unwelcome spotlight on the town—not a few people rolled their eyes when I told them I was a reporter there to cover the trial—and that has clearly alienated more than just so-called liberal elites. In fact, none of the people I spoke with in Dover who oppose the school board's action fit this stereotype. Some simply seemed embarrassed that their town was being turned into the butt of creationism jokes on programs like *The Daily Show* because of what they described as a small, albeit vocal, minority. (The fear of suffering similar embarrassment, along with the knowledge that pushing creationism into public school science classrooms has not passed muster in court, is why one rarely hears the religious right's national spokesmen mention the issue.) The school board's other opponents are people like Steve Stough, a registered Republican who feels strongly enough about the separation of church and state that he is among the suit's plaintiffs, and Bryan Rehm, another plaintiff, who described on the witness stand how the controversy has sowed discord among neighbors who used to get along.

The members of the Dover school board argue that, to the extent this is true, it is the plaintiffs' own fault: They're the ones who turned a few paragraphs read to high school students into a "train wreck," Sheila Harkins, current head of the board, told me. But if the issue is so minor, it's worth asking why the school board hasn't simply dropped it—why, indeed, it has dug in its heels and risked the possibility that, should the judge rule in the plaintiffs' favor, a school district that already pays the lowest teachers' salaries in the county will be saddled with an enormous legal bill (in the form of the opposing side's attorneys fees).

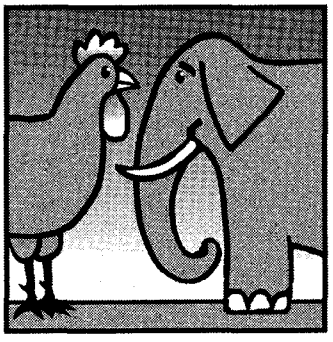
The latter concern evidently registered among Dover's voters, who on November 8 swept all eight of the school board's current members out of office. The incumbents had campaigned on a pledge to "keep out the ACLU and allow academic freedom," a message that apparently backfired. "I think voters were tired of everything this school board brought about," said one newly elected member, Bernadette Reinking. Indeed, while plaintiff Bryan Rehm was among those on the winning slate, board chair Sheila Harkins and intelligent design enthusiast Alan Bonsell received the fewest votes of all. ■

HOW A BUSH CRONY LANDED A KEY PUBLIC HEALTH POST—PUTTING AMERICANS AT RISK.

Germ Boys and Yes Men

JEREMY SCAHILL

In early November George W. Bush, struggling to claw his way upward in polls that had acquired the consistency of quicksand after two months of blunders and disasters, launched a new PR blitz. The Administration declared it was taking charge of the nation's health and security with an all-out war on the flu (to be conducted with vaccines provided by well-connected pharmaceutical companies). "Our country has been given fair warning of this danger to our homeland," Bush declared. "It's my responsibility as President to take measures now to protect the American people."



IGOR KOPELNITSKY

But if Bush hoped to wipe away the stain of Katrina—and the memory of a hapless Michael Brown steering FEMA in circles while New Orleans drowned—he should have thought twice about bringing up the specter of a public health emergency, because the man responsible for coordinating the federal response to a flu pandemic or bioterror attack could well be the next Michael Brown.

Meet Stewart Simonson. He's the official charged by Bush with "the protection of the civilian population from acts of bioterrorism and other public health emergencies"—a well-connected, ideological, ambitious Republican with zero public health management or medical expertise, whose previous job was as a corporate lawyer for Amtrak. When Col. Lawrence Wilkerson, former chief of staff for Secretary of State Colin Powell, recently speculated, "If something comes along that is truly serious...like a major pandemic, you are going to see the ineptitude of this government in a way that will take you back to the Declaration of Independence," many of those professionally concerned with such scenarios couldn't help thinking of Simonson. They recalled his own unsettling words at a recent Homeland Security subcommittee hearing on government response to a chemical or biological attack: "We're learning as we go."

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"Great. What we need in the middle of a crisis is somebody learning on the job at that high level of government," says Jerry Hauer, Simonson's immediate predecessor at the Office of Public Health Emergency Preparedness (OPHEP) and a veteran public health expert who served as Rudy Giuliani's director of emergency management from 1996 to 2000.

"If I was in charge, he wouldn't be in that position," says Dr. Irwin Redlener, director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University. "We don't have the best and brightest in the key positions, and this leaves us in a very, very precarious situation."

So how is it that Simonson ended up in a position that could impact the lives and health of millions? Simonson's qualifications can be summed up in two words: Tommy Thompson. Simonson was a protégé of the former Health and Human Services secretary and longtime Republican governor of Wisconsin. Thompson hired him out of the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1995 and put him on the political fast track, eventually naming him as his legal counsel. Thompson then used his influence as chair of Amtrak's board to place Simonson as the rail service's corporate counsel. When Bush named Thompson as HHS secretary, Simonson again went with him, and he has been rising through the ranks of the Administration and the Republican Party ever since. "He's a political hack, a sycophant," says Ed Garvey, a prominent Wisconsin attorney and the state's former deputy attorney general. "People just laughed when he was appointed to Amtrak, but when the word came out that he was in charge of bioterrorism, it turned to alarm. When you realize that people's lives are at stake, it's frightening. It's just one of those moments when you say, Oh, my God."

As they talked up the biowar threat, Cheney and his then–chief of staff Lewis Libby clashed with the public health experts at HHS.

What is particularly disturbing to public health professionals and others is that Simonson is in charge of insuring that the country has adequate vaccines and antivirals to combat an avian flu outbreak. "Mr. Simonson is a lawyer, not a medical expert," declared Representative Henry Waxman, who highlighted Simonson in a list of five "inexperienced individuals with political connections." The California Democrat warned that the appointment of people like Simonson has "led to legitimate public concern that those in government, particularly those who are relied upon to keep us safe from harm, are not competent or independent in their judgments." As evidence of this, Waxman cited Simonson's July appearance before the House Government Reform Committee, where Simonson "claimed he had sufficient funds to purchase influenza vaccine and antiviral medication for the nation. The next day his office submitted a funding request to Congress seeking an additional $150 million for flu vaccine and antiviral medication."

But it is Simonson's acquiescence in the Bush Administration's reordering of priorities in the name of the "war on terror" that has most distinguished him throughout his career at HHS. Shortly after 9/11 Thompson and Simonson began plans to create an office within HHS dedicated to combating terrorism, which became OPHEP. "When Stewart came into this, he was deputy counsel to the secretary and a very close friend of the secretary's," says Donald "DA" Henderson, named by Thompson as the founding director of OPHEP, who was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Bush. "Within a short period of time, this became all [Simonson] was doing—without a title."

In mid-2002, as the White House aggressively sought to convince the world that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, it was engaged on another front of the propaganda war at home: convincing Americans that Saddam was poised to deploy biological weapons in an attack on American soil. It was a battle that would pit Vice President Cheney and his now-indicted chief of staff Lewis "Scooter" Libby against a team of public health experts at HHS, led by then–OPHEP chief Jerry Hauer. Inside HHS it was Simonson who emerged as the White House's key strategic ally.

From his days as Defense Secretary during the Gulf War, Cheney was intensely interested in biological warfare. Libby, who worked for Cheney as an under secretary from 1990 to '92, shares his boss's obsession with biowar. Known in the Administration as "germ boy," Libby was obsessed with pre-emptively vaccinating the entire population against smallpox. (The fixation even extended to Libby's 1996 novel, *The Apprentice*, about a smallpox epidemic.) Shortly after 9/11 Cheney and Libby were briefed on a war game called Dark Winter, which simulated a smallpox attack on the United States. Interestingly, *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller, who penned a book called *Germs*, had taken part in the exercise, playing a reporter covering the attack. "It's a dramatic briefing," Libby told the *Washington Post*, "but we were well on this road already." Libby said that Cheney advocated "a forward-leaning position on protecting Americans from this threat."

Many in the public health community regarded Cheney and Libby's calls for mass smallpox vaccinations as fearmongering. Hauer, who also took part in Dark Winter, was among those asking uncomfortably probing questions. Hauer butted heads directly with Libby and his deputy on homeland security, Carole Kuntz. Another veteran of the first Bush Administration, Kuntz was Libby's special assistant at the Pentagon when Cheney was Defense Secretary. "The risks of vaccinating the whole country were greater than what we saw as the threat," says Hauer. "You're so focused on smallpox you lose perspective on all the other planning you're trying to do and nobody could make a good medical or public health case." Hauer, who ultimately would have been in charge of implementing Libby's program, says he had no choice but to oppose the plan. "There were times I felt you had to not be a yes man. You do an enormous disservice when you do that." Hauer says that when he raised objections to mass smallpox vaccinations, Kuntz became "downright offensive." Hauer adds, "It was very clear that I was not giving her the answers she wanted or telling her what she wanted to hear."

Like so many other instances when expert knowledge was discarded in the run-up to war, the bioterror obsession could well have long-term consequences. "It has been four years of throwing money at a perceived threat with very little to show for it," says Columbia's Dr. Redlener. Many public health experts say

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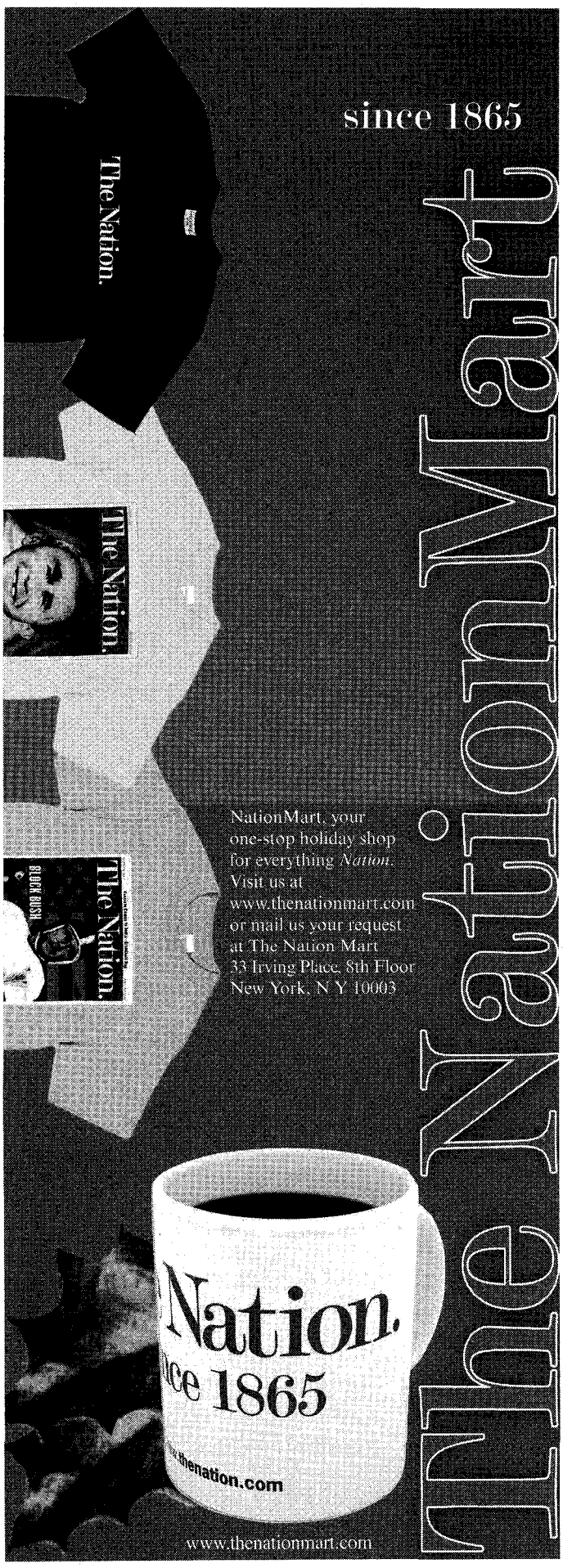
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that the billions spent preparing for these imagined threats have left the country dangerously unprepared for actual ones, including the very real possibility of an avian flu outbreak, which is only now being addressed.

Cheney's office was eventually forced to back off its call for universal vaccinations, but the Administration persisted in hyping the threat of a bioterror attack. In early 2003 Bush announced a major biodefense initiative during his now infamous State of the Union address, laced with references to Iraq's alleged WMDs, including the fraudulent evidence about Iraq attempting to import uranium from Niger. Bush spoke of the prospect of terror attacks with anthrax, botulinum toxin, Ebola and plague. "We must assume that our enemies would use these diseases as weapons," he told the nation. The $6 billion plan was called Project Bioshield. Bush named Cheney as his point man on the project; at HHS it was Stewart Simonson.

Bioshield quickly became the main focus of OPHEP's work. For eighteen months, according to current and former HHS officials, Simonson worked diligently with Cheney's office to win Congressional approval for the program. Cheney scared up support for the plan, personally telling lawmakers Bioshield was "life on the planet stuff." Henderson says that Simonson's close contacts at the White House were "very helpful working with the Bioshield legislation."

At the time, Hauer was still heading OPHEP, while Simonson was Thompson's deputy legal counsel. According to former and current HHS officials, a power struggle developed between Hauer—who had already angered the Vice President's office with his opposition to the smallpox plan—and the well-connected Simonson. Hauer was critical of the way Bioshield was being thrown together and disagreed with Simonson on the priorities emerging within HHS, which increasingly privileged "war on terror"–related programs over preparing city and state governments and agencies for disasters, as well as over plans vital to public health, like preparing for a flu epidemic.

"Bioshield was a disaster," says Hauer. "It was done half-assed.... Instead of doing it right, they rushed to get it done so that they could announce it in the State of the Union." Hauer alleges that while Bioshield was being developed, the White House political office, led by Karl Rove, was seeking to undermine his authority. A couple of years before, Hauer, a Democrat, had aroused the ire of his former boss, Rudy Giuliani, after he publicly endorsed Mark Green over Michael Bloomberg in the 2001 New York City mayoral race. When he subsequently went to Washington to work for HHS, his title remained "acting" assistant secretary because the White House refused to officially approve his appointment. "The White House was not going to confirm me, particularly after the folks in New York were calling saying I supported a Democrat. I'm a Democrat. It was as simple as that." Still, he says, Thompson backed him and retained him at HHS despite the political pressure.

By March 2003, however, Hauer had been stripped of much of his authority, and he knew his days were numbered. Simonson intervened to prevent Hauer from attending a briefing in Thompson's office on Bioshield. In a March 24 e-mail to Thompson's briefing coordinator Simonson wrote, "Bioshield does not involve Jerry so I am unclear as to why he invited [*sic*]."

With the 2004 election a year away, and the environment at the

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agency becoming more hostile, Hauer says he could not in good faith continue to work for the Administration. "The political side of this White House is very vindictive," says Hauer. He says it was made clear to him that if he was not willing to endorse the President and "attend events," it was time to move on. "I don't want to be disrespectful of the office of the presidency," Hauer says. "I just felt that things needed a change, so I could not be part of the Administration and not support the White House. Plus, the fact is there was enormous frustration at HHS in large part because of Stewart."

In April 2004, with Hauer out of the way, Bush named Simonson director of OPHEP. Hauer says that with Simonson the Administration has "somebody they know will go along with pretty much anything they want." On July 21, a day before the 9/11 commission issued its findings, Bush signed Bioshield into law. The White House released a statement saying, "Today's action is just the latest step the President has taken to win the War on Terror and protect our homeland."

Even within the "war on terror" community, Bioshield has proved controversial. That's because more than 80 percent of the nearly $1 billion allocated under the program has gone to a scandal-plagued company that has never successfully produced an FDA-licensed vaccine. In November 2004 California-based VaxGen was handed one of the largest government vaccine contracts in history. The company is largely known for its failed AIDS vaccine, and just a few months before VaxGen won the Bioshield contract, the Nasdaq took the unusual step of delisting it from trading because of financial irregularities. So why did it get the contract? "I have no idea why VaxGen was selected," admits Henderson, who remains chair of the influential Secretary's Advisory Council at HHS. "It's not for me to decide whether it's a good idea or not." But it was for Simonson and his staff. And as with many Bush Administration contracts, several signs point to cronyism as the deciding factor—among them: VaxGen CEO Lance Gordon is a longtime associate of one of Simonson's top deputies on Bioshield, Dr. Phil Russell, former chief of Army medical research.

Now a powerful group of Republican lawmakers is pushing "Bioshield 2" through Congress. The legislation would strip people injured by vaccines of their right to sue manufacturers and would virtually eliminate pharmaceutical corporate accountability. The legislation would also make the newly created Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Agency the only federal agency exempt from the Freedom of Information Act.

Simonson did not return numerous messages left for him at his office. But Thompson stands by him, as does Henderson. "This is not necessarily somebody who has got a lot of depth of background here, but you can get people who have a variety of expertise. I would liken it to having a CEO in a company," says Henderson, adding that Simonson "may not have been qualified but he is a real learner.... We are where we are today because Stewart pressed this very hard. He read a lot, he talked a lot, he learned a lot."

Perhaps not quite enough, because where we are today, according to many public health experts, is unprepared. ■

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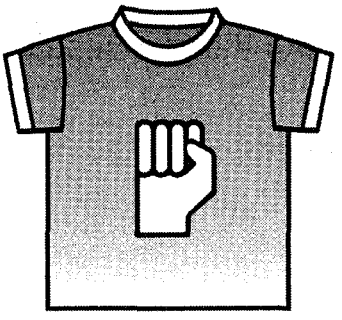
CAMPUS CRUSADERS BELIEVE THE TIME IS RIPE FOR A BREAKTHROUGH.

Students Confront Sweatshops

RICHARD APPELBAUM AND PETER DREIER

At Columbia University in September, twenty-four students marched to president Lee Bollinger's office, chanted "Hey, hey, Prez Bo, sweatshop labor's got to go," and left a cupcake as a gift. At the University of Michigan activists ran a mock sweatshop, then went to president Mary Sue Coleman's office with a list of demands to end the university's purchase of clothing made in sweatshops. At the University of California, Riverside, students held a sweatshop fashion show to raise awareness of conditions for garment workers.



IGOR KOPELNITSKY

A new wave of campus activism against sweatshops is sweeping colleges across the country. Students had barely returned to school this fall when more than forty campuses—including Duke, Kansas State, Brown, Loyola, MIT, Macalester, Berkeley and the universities of Indiana, Southern Mississippi and Connecticut—were hit by demonstrations organized by United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS).

Universities purchase about $3 billion in T-shirts, sweatshirts, caps, sneakers and sports uniforms adorned with their institutions' names and logos. The clothing is designed under licensing arrangements by companies like Nike, Reebok, Champion and Russell, which outsource their production to factories around the world. For example, the University of North Carolina earns more than $2.9 million annually by farming out its logo to more than 500 licensees that produce clothing in factories in Mexico, Central America, Asia and elsewhere.

Since 1998, when Duke students took over the university president's office, some 200 colleges have adopted antisweatshop codes of conduct. They typically require licensees to use factories that pay a living wage, follow adequate labor standards and allow workers to form independent unions.

While some well-publicized gains have been made—including recognition of employee-run unions in some factories, limits on mandatory and unpaid overtime and a decline in sexual harassment of female employees—these codes of conduct have proved difficult to enforce. Major brands make clothing for the college market in thousands of factories around the world, and their college-bound goods are only a small fraction of total production, making it difficult to hold them accountable.

"The codes are just empty promises unless universities back up their commitment with enforceable standards that brands have to live up to," said Zack Knorr, a student leader at the University of California, Riverside.

Moreover, the thirty-year-old apparel quota system, which had set strict limits on the quantity of apparel different countries could export to the United States and Europe, ended January 1. Companies can now roam the world to find the cheapest manufacturing. For most companies that means China, where wages are low and independent unions are illegal.

Student activists are now demanding that universities require licensees to contract exclusively with factories that not only adhere strictly to codes of conduct but also restrict their production to collegiate apparel. They want workers in this sector to be represented by independent labor unions or employee-owned cooperatives, and to be paid a living wage tied to local prices. Even if higher costs are passed on to consumers, price increases would be trivial. Apparel workers in developing countries typically earn 1 percent to 2 percent of the retail price. If paying a living wage doubled workers' wages, the $25 sweatshirt with the campus logo would cost only 50 cents or a dollar more.

With the help of the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), an independent monitoring organization with 145 member colleges and universities, USAS has identified a number of factories around the world—including in Thailand, South Africa, Kenya, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Indonesia and the United States—that could qualify under these more stringent rules. The campaign calls for phasing in the program: In the first year 25 percent of production must come from the designated factories, and by the third year, 75 percent. If enough universities adopt these standards, the number of sweat-free factories will steadily increase. By creating a collegiate sector of high-quality, worker-friendly factories, USAS expects to prove that there is a market for goods made under ethical conditions.

"USAS is proposing that universities ask their licensees to strike a bargain with a subset of their suppliers—stable orders at fair prices in exchange for a lasting, enforceable commitment to high labor standards," explained Scott Nova, WRC's director. "This approach would make compliance with codes of conduct a winning proposition for factories, which is not the case today."

Campus crusaders, who view their efforts as part of a broader "fair trade" movement, believe that the time is ripe for a breakthrough on several major campuses, which would create momentum elsewhere. A growing number of university administrators share the students' frustration with the slow pace of progress that has been made, and are willing to try a new approach.

Jim Wilkerson, Duke's director of trademark licensing, said the USAS proposal is "feasible and doable" and that "support is likely." If he's right, this will be a major step forward to rein in footloose apparel companies that exploit desperate workers. By showing that they care what they wear, students can set a standard for the rest of us. ■

Richard Appelbaum teaches sociology and global and international studies at UC, Santa Barbara. Peter Dreier teaches public policy and political science at Occidental College.

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THE CURRENT FRANCO-ARAB REBELLION IS THE ANGUISHED SCREAM OF A LOST GENERATION.

Why Is France Burning?

DOUG IRELAND

The tsunami of vandalism, arson and riot by young people of color that began in the suburban ghettos of Paris—now in its twelfth night as I write—has rolled right across France, touching 274 cities and towns, and shows few signs of abating. It should have surprised no one, for it is the result of thirty years of government neglect—of the failure of the French political classes, both right and left, to make any serious effort to integrate its Muslim and black populations into the French economy and culture; and of the deep-seated, searing, soul-destroying racism that the unemployed and profoundly alienated young of the ghettos face every day of their lives, both from the police and when trying to find a job.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The ghettos where festering resentment has now burst into flames were created as a matter of industrial policy by the French state. Why is France's population of immigrant origin—mostly Arab, some black—today so large (more than 10 percent of the total population)? Because during the post–World War II boom years of reconstruction and economic expansion, which the French call *les trentes glorieuses*, the thirty glorious years, it was policy to recruit from France's colonies laborers and factory and menial workers. These immigrant workers, primarily from North Africa, were desperately needed to allow the French economy to expand, despite the shortage of manpower caused by the two world wars that had killed many Frenchmen and slashed the native French birthrates. Moreover, these immigrant workers were favored by industrial employers as passive and unlikely to join unions and strike.

This government-and-industry-sponsored influx of Arab workers was reinforced following Algerian independence by the arrival of the Harkis, native Algerians who fought for and worked with France during the anticolonial struggle for independence—and were horribly treated by France. Some 100,000 Harkis were killed by the Algerian National Liberation Front after the French shamelessly abandoned them to a lethal fate when the occupying army evacuated itself and French colonists from Algeria. Moreover, those Harki families who were saved (often at the initiative of individual military commanders who refused to obey orders not to evacuate them) were parked in filthy, crowded concentration camps in France for many long years and never benefited from any government aid—a nice reward for their sacrifices for France, of which they were, after all, legally citizens. Their ghettoized children and grandchildren, naturally, harbor certain resentments.

France's other immigrant workers were warehoused in huge high-rise, low-income ghettos—known as *cités*—specially built for them and deliberately placed out of sight in the suburbs around most of France's major urban agglomerations, so that their darker-skinned inhabitants wouldn't pollute the center cities. Now forty and fifty years old, these high-rise human warehouses are run-down, dilapidated, sinister places with broken elevators, heating systems left dysfunctional in winter, dirt and dog shit in the hallways and few commercial amenities. Shopping for basic necessities is often quite limited and difficult, while entertainment and recreational facilities for youth are truncated and inadequate when they exist at all. Apartments and schools (frequently staffed by weary, cynical, indifferent teachers) are terribly overcrowded.

December 3 marks the twenty-second anniversary of the Marche des Beurs (*beur* is French slang for "Arab"). I was present to see the cortege of 100,000 arrive in Paris—it was the Franco-Arab equivalent of Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The Marche des Beurs' central theme was the demand to be recognized as French *comme les autres*, like everyone else—a demand, in sum, for complete integration. But the dream of integration failed miserably.

For the mass of Franco-Arabs, little has changed since 1983, and the current rebellion is the anguished scream of a lost generation in search of an identity. When US cities burned in the 1960s, King said, "A riot is at bottom the language of the unheard." In France it's the language of adolescents, kids caught between two cultures and belonging to neither; of kids who, born in France and often speaking little Arabic, don't know the country where their parents were born but feel excluded, marginalized and invisible in the country where they live.

In 1990 Socialist president François Mitterrand described what life was like for jobless ghetto youths warehoused in the overcrowded *cités*: "What hope does a young person have who's been born in a soulless *quartier*, who lives in an unspeakably ugly high-rise, surrounded by more ugliness, imprisoned by gray walls in a gray wasteland and condemned to a gray life, with all around a society that prefers to look away until it's time to get mad, time to FORBID?" But Mitterrand's compassionate words masked a failed policy, and fifteen years after his diagnosis the hopelessness and alienation of these ghetto youths' "gray lives" have only become deeper and more rancid still.

The Chirac government's response to the rebellion has been tone-deaf. It's led by the hyper-ambitious, demagogic interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy—he's been openly campaigning to replace Chirac in 2007—who has only poured verbal kerosene on the flames by dismissing the ghetto youth in the most in-

Doug Ireland, a longtime Nation *contributor who lived in France for a decade, can be reached through his blog, Direland, at http://direland.typepad.com/direland.*

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sulting, racist terms and calling for tough repression.

Sarkozy has been thundering that the spreading violence is centrally "organized." But on the telephone from Paris, the dean of French investigative reporters, Claude Angeli, editor of *Le Canard Enchaîné*, told me, "That's not true—this isn't being organized by the Islamist fundamentalists, as Sarkozy is implying to scare people. Sure, kids in neighborhoods are using their cell phones and text messages to warn each other when the cops are coming so they can move and pick other targets for their arson. But the rebellion is spreading because the kids have a sense of solidarity with each other that comes from watching television—they imitate what they're seeing, they've experienced the same racist police abuse that helped spark the riots and they sense themselves targeted by Sarkozy's inflammatory rhetoric."

"The rebellion is spreading spontaneously," Angeli adds. "It's driven especially by incredibly racist police conduct that is the daily lot of these children. They're arrested or controlled by the police, shaken down, pushed around and have their papers checked simply because they have dark skin, and the police are verbally brutal, calling them *bougnoules* [something like the American slur "towel heads," only worse], 'dirty Arabs' and more. The police bark, 'Lower your eyes! Lower your eyes!' as if they had no right even to look a policeman in the face. It's utterly dehumanizing. No wonder these kids feel so divorced from authority."

When Sarkozy wanted to make an appearance at the Catholic bishops' conference in Paris after days of rioting, they refused to let him speak; instead, the bishops denounced "those who would call for repression and instill fear" instead of responding to the economic, social and racial causes of the riots. This was an unusually sharp rebuke directed squarely at Sarkozy.

The left, in power for fourteen of the past twenty-four years, bears a large share of responsibility for failing to fight poverty, racism and exclusion. But the conservatives have made things much worse. Under the headline "Budget Cuts Exasperate Suburban Mayors," *Le Monde*'s riot coverage reported how Chirac has compounded thirty years of neglect by slashing even deeper into social programs: 60 percent cuts over the past three years in subsidies for neighborhood groups that work with youths, and budgets slashed for job training, education, the fight against illiteracy and for neighborhood police who get to know ghetto kids and work with them. (After the first riots in Toulouse, Sarkozy told the neighborhood police there, "Your job is not to be playing soccer with these kids, your job is to arrest them!")

Budget cuts for social programs plus more repression is a prescription for more violence—but a poll released on France 2 public TV showed that 57 percent of the French support Sarkozy's hard-line approach to the ghetto youths' rebellion.

Chirac's government—with no Socialist opposition—has now declared a state of emergency, using a 1955 law passed during France's colonial war in Algeria that permits the imposition of a curfew and suspension of civil liberties, including those of the press, and permits detention without trial, the use of military tribunals and bans on public meetings. The *Syndicat des avocats* and the *Syndicat de la magistrature* (the lawyers' and judges' unions) issued a cry of alarm, denouncing the "disastrous war logic" inherent in invoking the law. Pointing out that this law was not even used in the May 1968 student-worker rebellions, their joint statement said: "Stopping the violence and re-establishing order in the suburbs is a necessity. But must that imply submitting them to emergency legislation inherited from the colonial period? We know where the cycle of provocation and repression leads.... The ghettos have no need of a state of emergency. They desperately need justice, respect, and equality."

But the government's response means that what the French refer to as the "social fracture" can only get worse. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

hicles the middle classes no longer want; they make those vehicles survive years beyond their life expectancy; they make do with big old gas guzzlers because they can't scrape together enough for a newer car. That's why I advocated subsidies, like the energy subsidies that help pay for home heating and help make old houses more energy efficient.

Beyond circumstance, there is a philosophical incoherence to the notion that everyone should live in a high-density city. Who would farm this vast land to feed us urban dwellers? Who would mine? Who would staff the polluting factories that nobody wants in their urban backyard? Who would cut the timber for our houses? Who would staff the national parks that the urban middle classes so enjoy during their vacations? Who would bottle the water that we so casually drink? Who would operate the dams that provide hydroelectric power?

And wouldn't life be boring if everyone lived in a city, if a land as vast as America became simply an archipelago of metropolises separated by wilderness, with no villages, no hamlets, no rural folk, no country traditions? We on the left often bemoan the homogenizing forces of globalization. Well, what could be more homogeneous than a land made up only of cities?

Yes, there are large problems with America's oil-dependent culture; but to blame the poor for those problems, and to shy away from political responses that might ease some of their pain is a true betrayal of people who should be our core constituents. If progressives are ever to recapture center stage in America, we have to throw off such elitist attitudes. Make the poor and the rural feel stupid and unwanted and, not surprisingly, they will spurn our politics.

The rural poor I'm writing about could never be on a public transport infrastructure. They're too far off the grid. These are precisely the communities liberated by the automobile. In the pre-industrial age, such places would have been quintessential peasant communities—geographically isolated, able to travel only as far as a horse and cart could carry them, isolated from the broader economy and the larger cultural currents. Cars, while a double-edged sword, freed these people. To deny that the oil economy provided any benefits is as simplistic as the counterposition that denies the harm caused by carbon-related climate change. Both arguments do society a deep disservice and neither can, or should, connect with the needs of ordinary people.

A purist anti-car position condemns huge numbers of people to isolation and denuded lives. If progressives want to put together electoral majorities, we have to respect the needs and wishes of ordinary people as surely as we respect the needs and wishes of a privileged urban elite. SASHA ABRAMSKY

CORRECTION

In Liza Featherstone's "Manna From Hell" [Nov. 21], David Vitter was misidentified as representing South Carolina, instead of Louisiana, in the Senate.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Postcards From the Abyss

CHRIS TOENSING

NIGHT DRAWS NEAR: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War.
By Anthony Shadid.
Henry Holt. 424 pp. $26.

THE ASSASSINS' GATE: America in Iraq.
By George Packer.
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 467 pp. $26.

Before the beheadings, before the insouciant thumbs-up in Abu Ghraib and the defiant purple fingers held aloft at polling stations, the iconic image of the Iraq War was a fallen statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad's Firdaus Square. People across the world watched rapt as the sculpture, only the day before an ugly reminder of tyranny to passersby, toppled ignominiously into the street to be dismembered with joyous abandon by newly liberated Iraqis. For backers of the war, that sight was all one needed to banish any remaining doubts that George W. Bush's invasion was necessary and just. Almost overnight, however, the Internet was buzzing with news of wide-angle shots that showed a US tank dragging the statue down to the ground. For many opponents of the war, that tank was all one needed to understand the imperialistic essence of the invasion—and to suspect that the Bush Administration's talk of liberation was as fake as its intelligence on yellowcake purchases in Niger.

Anthony Shadid's eyewitness account of the statue toppling offers vindication to neither black-and-white point of view. The *Washington Post* correspondent, who rode out the "major combat" with a tiny band of unembedded reporters in the Iraqi capital, observed as hundreds of ordinary Iraqis strove from midday to dusk to wrench the ex-dictator's metal likeness from its granite pedestal. But their ropes, rocks, sledgehammers and chains could not dislodge Saddam from his perch. As sundown approached, their strenuous labors, accompanied by chants of "There is no god but God; Saddam is the enemy of God" appeared to be in vain. In drove the Marines in their armored vehicle. "A hush rolled through the crowd," Shadid writes, as one of them covered Saddam's head with an American flag. Then an Iraqi hung an old Iraqi flag over the statue as well, and the cheers resumed as the Marines eventually pulled it down. The celebrations shown on CNN were real, but they were only the conclusion to a longer and more complicated story.

This is one of many such stories told by Shadid in *Night Draws Near*, a fluid narrative composed largely of his Pulitzer Prize–winning dispatches from prewar and occupied Iraq but including much, such as the complete tale of the fall of Saddam's statue, that he has not told before. His stories are always affecting, sometimes uplifting, much more frequently heart-rending. As one might guess from the title, *Night Draws Near* is written in a register of foreboding.

Anthony Shadid's and George Packer's eyewitness accounts of the Iraq War depict a tragedy rather than a morality play.

When Shadid is at his best, the stories are compact illustrations of key moments in Iraq's torturous transition from sanctions-ravaged dictatorship to unsteady US dominion to emerging failed state. At Firdaus Square he captures the depth of Iraqi loathing for the despot now on trial for crimes against humanity, the genuine gratitude (albeit tinged with shame) of many Iraqis that the United States had done what they could not do themselves and the sense—present from the beginning—that the latter feelings would be fleeting. Mere months later in a provincial town on the Euphrates, he listens as an officer in the new police force explains that "even our families call us collaborators" with a foreign occupation. How fierce were the resentments stirred up by the counterinsur-

Chris Toensing is editor of Middle East Report, *published by the Middle East Research and Information Project (www.merip.org).*

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gency campaign in what the US military and media dubbed the Sunni Triangle? Elsewhere in that region, a father tells him he had "no other choice" but to kill his son, who had pointed out guerrillas to US soldiers. Otherwise, the father explains, his entire family would have been targets.

An Arabic speaker of Lebanese ancestry and a veteran Middle East correspondent, Shadid enjoys considerable advantages over the legions of journalists who parachuted into Baghdad and are now publishing books about their experiences. (Full disclosure: I know Shadid, a former colleague on the editorial committee of *Middle East Report*.) His facility with Iraqis' native tongue allows him to translate their painful memories, their self-contradictory hopes and fears, their sense of humor—in short, their humanity. And because of his experience in prewar Iraq and in the wider Arab world, he was in a position to appreciate truths that eluded the war party in Washington. Of course, few Iraqis would mourn the demise of Saddam's regime, but they would quickly chafe under a US-proclaimed "occupation," a word that in Arabic inevitably evokes the dispossession of the Palestinians at the hands of Israel. Even more, they would doubt the sincerity of a liberating power that "tilted" toward Saddam during his disastrous war with Iran, abandoned rebellious Shiites in 1991 to be massacred by the tens of thousands after encouraging them to "take matters into their own hands" and then pushed hardest for the sanctions that devastated Iraqi society during the ensuing decade. Others have written about these things, but Shadid helps readers to feel them viscerally. Most important, his familiarity with subtleties of Arab culture affords him access to the homes of Iraqis from all walks of life, including, for instance, the humble apartment of a working-class Shiite family. His stories from these visits are sometimes about politics but mostly about the mundane indignities—unemployment, intermittent electricity, compromised physical safety and fraying social fabric—that have soured most of Iraq's urban population on the post-Saddam era.

The strengths of the book—its unflinching depiction of wartime life for Iraqi Arabs and its focus on the resiliency of Iraqi nationalism in Arab areas—simultaneously conceal and reveal its limitations in scope. Shadid does not venture into Kurdistan, where Iraqi nationalism means something else entirely, sanctions were not so crushing, fighting has been minimal and attitudes about the war are correspondingly brighter. His last, meaty chapter recounts the April 2004 revolt of Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army, the only organized Shiite force to take up arms against the United States, and Sadr's dramatic gestures of solidarity with the besieged Sunni Arab guerrillas in Falluja. So far, however, this hint of the pan-Iraqi intifada expected by many opponents of the war has been an aberration from what has been overwhelmingly a Sunni Arab insurgency. The sectarian dimension of Iraqi politics—however exaggerated by Western champions of a "three-state solution," notably Peter Galbraith, an adviser to the Kurds, and Leslie Gelb of the Council on Foreign Relations—is mentioned but left unexplored in Shadid's account. The January elections, which figure in the book's epilogue, formally inaugurated the current period, in which roadside bombs are still killing US soldiers but clashing Iraqi visions for the country's future (one of them Baathist revanchism) have displaced the American presence as the driver of insurgency and chaos, and more Iraqis are dying at the hands of fellow Iraqis than at the hands of American soldiers.

As Shadid makes clear, the word 'occupation' inevitably evokes in Iraqi ears the dispossession of the Palestinians at the hands of Israel.

These centrifugal forces receive greater attention in George Packer's *The Assassins' Gate*, which sits bundled with Shadid's book at the top of the stack of reporters' dispatches from Iraq. Packer belongs to that subset of liberal hawks who were unconvinced by the Bush Administration's urgings that a dilapidated dictatorship posed a "grave and gathering danger" to the United States but cautiously supported the invasion on the grounds that Iraqis would be better off without Saddam and his cronies. As the euphoria at Firdaus Square dissipated, most of Packer's cohort took the easy way out, seeking refuge in self-righteous excoriation of the Bush Administration's incompetence as liberators and occupiers. Much to his credit, Packer took extended tours in Iraq to test not only that conventional wisdom but also his own assumptions. The result is a tour de force—but it is not without its own uncomfortable silences.

Like Shadid, Packer is a storyteller, and an artful one. His canvas, however, is broader, encompassing not just the inching of post-Saddam Iraq toward the abyss but also the intellectual history of humanitarian intervention, the political history of the regime change crowd's capture of Washington and a little social history of the awkward interactions between American soldiers and diplomats turned "nation builders" and their human raw material. These sections of *The Assassins' Gate* are fairly familiar, but they contain some of the most stinging indictments anywhere of the neoconservatives and their patrons, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld. After his Iraq sojourns, Packer goes to Washington to measure the attitudes of the war party toward their grandiose adventure gone bad. Former Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz is "probably at the peak" of those having trouble sleeping at night, another former official tells him. Who else has trouble? "That's a good question," Packer's source says twice. He doesn't come up with a name.

Packer's most original reporting is elegiac in tone, and it comes from Kirkuk and Des Moines, Iowa. In Kirkuk, the contested, multiethnic city lying on the edge of the Kurdish heartland and sandwiched between two of Iraq's largest oilfields, he meets Luna Dawood. Dawood is an Assyrian Christian woman who, on orders from the deposed regime, distributed cash payments to Kurdish and Turkmen families evicted from their homes in the latest regime campaign to "Arabize" the vicinity of the oil riches. "She was," Packer writes, "a bureaucratic expediter of ethnic cleansing." In his hands, though, she is a tragic figure, a woman whose anguish at her complicity seems genuine and who quietly defied her superiors' command to burn records of the mass displacement as the 2003 war loomed, hiding them in her house, where someday they might have guided officials looking to compensate the victims of Arabization. Her story frames a lengthy, sensitive exposition of the ethnic tensions that rile today's Kirkuk—perhaps the most dangerous flashpoint in the country. Packer neither vilifies nor romanticizes the Kurdish parties, whose wads of dinars to build brick houses are today creating facts on the ground, "Kurdifying" the Kirkuk region long before any truth and reconciliation process can make use of Dawood's storehouse of documents. Again, Iraq reads as tragedy, not a morality play.

In Des Moines, on Memorial Day 2004,

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Packer stands at the grave of Pfc. Kurt Frosheiser, killed seven months earlier while on a mission in Baghdad. Standing next to him is the soldier's grief-stricken father, Chris, who had read some of Packer's *New Yorker* pieces and begun to correspond with him. Visits to Chris Frosheiser bracket a probing discussion of the domestic debate on the war, a debate oddly disconnected from the grim reality on the ground. (Every reporter who comes back from Iraq comments on how surreal this is.) During the 2004 campaign the incumbent refused to acknowledge the chaos, and the challenger offered little but a pledge to manage the chaos better. While this ambivalence is slowly receding from the public square, Packer's portrait of Chris Frosheiser is a salutary reminder of why the ambivalence has been so durable. A lifelong Democrat who voted for John Kerry "by a hair," Frosheiser cannot bring himself to pronounce upon whether the war was "worth it" or not. "He would not have chosen to give up Kurt for democracy in the Middle East," Packer explains. "Now he wants Kurt's death to be part of some historical good." Neither does he want to think of his son's death in such abstract terms, however.

So does Packer think the war was worth it? After all, he is one of the most thoughtful of the liberal hawks, and unlike the rest of them he has spent months in Iraq and Iowa staring the human subjects of "humanitarian intervention" right in the face. Frustratingly for readers in search of an answer, if not a *mea culpa*, he doesn't say. His October 13 op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times* is more forthcoming, but also oblique: "Was it worth it, then? If it couldn't be done right, should it have been done at all? For Americans today, the answer has to be no. For Iraqis, and for the future of this crucial region, with which our own future is inextricably linked, it's difficult to know definitively." The problem with this philosophical dodge is obvious: To say that only time will tell if the war was worth it for Iraqis is a banality that glosses over how many Iraqis have died unnecessarily, and how many more might die in the future, before history renders its verdict. But Packer anticipates this point in the book, noting that few Iraqis he met, despite their profound disappointment with the United States and shock at what is happening to their society, regretted the overthrow of Saddam. A young woman named Aseel, reminded of the nonexistent weapons of mass destruction the Bush Administration used to justify the invasion, retorts: "We are more important than missiles!" Self-evident, from both Iraqi and humanitarian perspectives. However, as Packer surely knows, humanitarian considerations were decidedly secondary in the minds of the war's architects—including Wolfowitz, whom he portrays somewhat sentimentally as the Administration's bleeding heart. For Bush and Cheney the most significant consideration was reasserting American hegemony in a volatile, oil-rich region, a motive to which Packer gives far less space than he does to the fantasies of humanitarian interventionists like Paul Berman, who had absolutely no influence on the Administration's thinking, and of Iraqi exiles like Kanan Makiya, a professor at Brandeis and Wolfowitz ally who had not laid eyes on Iraq in decades.

One of the most thoughtful of the liberal hawks, Packer discovered in Iraq a reality that profoundly tested his own assumptions.

Makiya, an architect and writer whose terrifying portrait of Saddam's Iraq, *Republic of Fear* (1989), stiffened the breastbones of liberal hawks as an earlier generation of US troops deployed to the Persian Gulf, is Packer's central and most interesting character. In the Arab world Makiya is better known for *Cruelty and Silence* (1994), much of which is devoted to a polemical assault upon Arab intellectuals who, he claims, failed to speak out against Saddam's regime. Although the allegation is overstated, it echoes the feeling of many Iraqis—and not just exiles—that Arab governments and even their populations overlooked Saddam's role in Iraqi suffering while verbally defending Iraq from the warplanes and embargoes of the West. There are few sharper debates on Al Jazeera these days than those between Iraqis and other Arabs about the meaning of solidarity. The offer of Arab League head Amr Moussa to broker a "national reconciliation conference," which followed the polarizing October 15 constitutional referendum, came only after vehement Iraqi criticism of what has seemed to be tacit Arab-government backing of the insurgency. Packer writes about how Aseel flummoxed her Egyptian interlocutor in an Internet chat room with the suggestion that, in his words, "Americans and Israelis seemed to care about Iraqis more than other Arabs did." "What the war gave people like her," he concludes, "is hope."

Hope is, indeed, more compelling than fear. Yet hope is an unstable sentiment, and, as we have seen in Iraq, can easily turn to despair if it doesn't restore the electricity supply. History will not remember Makiya so much for his insight into the darker crevices of Arab nationalism as for his insistence, while sharing a stage with Richard Perle, that invading US troops would be welcomed with "sweets and flowers." Like the Bush Administration, in the words of Shadid, Makiya regarded Iraq as a "tabula rasa on which to build a new and different state." Today he admits his surprise at the unwillingness of "former regime elements" to concede defeat, as well as at how parties with communal and religious agendas have overwhelmed his brand of secular liberalism in the post-Saddam political arena. Speaking at the American Enterprise Institute on October 5, he called Iraq's new Constitution "a fundamentally destabilizing document" and "a patently unworkable deal. To the extent that it is made to work it will work toward fratricide."

Iraq may yet avoid the worse fates one can imagine, but as Shadid's book demonstrates, it was always an unlikely candidate for instant liberal democratization by the sword. Its wheezing infrastructure has yet to recover from the Iran-Iraq war, let alone the next two, and especially the sanctions in between. Its highly educated middle class was reduced by sanctions to penury or emigration. Sanctions and regime repression incubated social conservatism, strengthened kinship ties and encouraged religious piety. Not surprisingly, when the regime fell tribal loyalties and political Islam were the most powerful forces vying to replace it. Sanctions are the most notable elision in Packer's account—like some Iraqi exiles and successive US administrations, liberal supporters of the war seem to have believed that the voluminous UN and NGO reports documenting their insidious effects were just so much regime propaganda. One of the first things Packer noticed after landing in Baghdad was how worn Iraqis looked; this observation appears in a chapter about the "psychological demolition" wrought by Saddam. Such demolition is indisputable, but Packer neglects the fact that international isolation and plummeting living standards under sanctions must share responsibility with Saddam's regime for the bleakness of Iraqi life. Here he betrays traces of the "simple, two-dimensional" image of Iraq that

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Shadid rightly attributes to most American observers of the country. Iraqis appreciate Saddam's culpability in their thirty-five-year nightmare more than anyone else, but like everyone else they are capable of forming a complex mental calculus of blame.

Packer concludes with one last visit to his friend and mentor Kanan Makiya, who tells him: "I think it was Ahmad [Chalabi] who once said of me that I embody the triumph of hope over experience." Since it was Makiya who imbued Packer with his hopeful vision for Iraq, one detects in this line a note of self-criticism. The next time American liberals are tempted to become laptop bombardiers, he seems to be saying, they should listen to someone who has visited the target recently—before the bombing starts. ■

From Beirut to Damascus

CHARLES GLASS

In the autumn of 1972, arriving in Lebanon as a graduate student at the American University of Beirut, I discovered radical student politics. The mainly Palestinian-led student movements were only a few years behind Paris and New York, and strikes were common. When police raided sit-ins, students sang "We Shall Overcome." Discussions went on all night. Caffeine, alcohol, tobacco and hashish stimulated self-criticism sessions and persuaded many a young woman to hasten the revolution in bed. One of the more urgent debates was whether the Palestinians should choose a secular, democratic state in all of Palestine-Israel or content themselves with a truncated Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It did not occur to anyone that the Palestinians' pop-gun war on Israel's northern border was unlikely to compel the Israeli government to offer either option. Still, the talking went on. And on.

A friend took me to his aunt's house in one of the refugee camps for the Arabs expelled from Palestine in 1948. The young man in the photograph atop her television, beaming a kind of innocent hope, was her son. He had died the month before in the Black September kidnapping of Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games in Munich. My friend and I used to go to a tailor's shop near the synagogue in Wadi Abou Jamil, Beirut's Jewish Quarter. The tailor gave us Turkish coffee and joked with my friend about Palestine. When my friend was 2 years old, in 1948, his mother had carried him on her back from their village in Galilee over the border into Lebanon. When they left, the Israelis bulldozed his village and hundreds of others—lest the refugees have anything to return to. The tailor, who was born in Lebanon, said he would never leave. The fact that he could move to Israel anytime, while my friend could not even visit, made him laugh. The two exchanged jocular ethnic abuse with an ease unknown to me in California, where race could be a touchy issue. Today, neither one lives in Lebanon.

BOOKS DISCUSSED IN THIS ESSAY

HIZBULLAH: The Story From Within.
By Naim Qassem. Saqi. 320 pp. $42.50.

IN THE PATH OF HIZBULLAH.
By Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh. Syracuse. 196 pp. $24.95.

TRANSIT BEIRUT: New Writing and Images.
Edited by Malu Halasa and Roseanne Khalaf. Saqi. 191 pp. $18.95.

INHERITING SYRIA: Bashar's Trial by Fire.
By Flynt Leverett. Brookings Institution. 286 pp. $27.95.

Wadi Abou Jamil was a curving road of old, rickety apartment buildings with shops and cafes on the ground floor. The lovely synagogue in those days seemed as poorly attended as churches and mosques. At the eastern edge of what would later be Muslim West Beirut, the Jewish Quarter became vulnerable in the civil war that began in April 1975. No one wanted to destroy it. On the contrary, Yasir Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization and the Christian Phalangists fought each other to defend it—Arafat to prove his movement was not anti-Semitic and the Phalange to ingratiate itself with Israel. The losers, as often elsewhere in the world, were the Jews. Their abandoned houses gave shelter after 1982 to Lebanese Shiite Muslims, who had been displaced by Israeli bombardment and occupation.

Very old men, red tarbooshes tottering on their wizened heads, looked on the young generation with skepticism. Coffeehouse politics, nightclubs and relaxed sexual mores offended their honor. It had been bad enough when their mothers renounced the veil fifty years earlier, but daughters unfastening their bras were too much. The old politicians' collaboration with imperialism, their tawdry compromises and their betrayal of independence repelled the children. Youth's insistence on change brought it all down—the tarbooshes as much as the coffeehouse debates, the revolutionary aspirations as well as the Levantine compromises and mixing of peoples. The war it produced let religion out of church and mosque, twisting a political battle into a struggle between Jesus and Mohammed that could not be contained within the borders of Lebanon. The freedom fighters on both sides destroyed the fabric of the downtown gathering places of all communities—the ancient souks, smoky restaurants, trading companies and cafes. People and ideas were segregated by a north-south Green Line, crossed only by bullets and artillery shells. Of course, the war among the Lebanese was also a series of wars by proxy between Israel and Syria, Israel and the Palestinians and Syria and the Palestinians.

Until the war Beirut was a jet-set city. For the visiting rich there were yacht harbors, casinos, dancing girls, skiing and water-skiing amid Mediterranean palms and cypresses. They did not see the Palestinian refugee camps around the airport, the armed Palestinian commandos, the Phalangist military parades or the slums expanding to accommodate peasants driven from the south by Israeli bombs and mechanized farming. The Palestinians had transplanted their revolution from Jordan to Lebanon in 1971, but their conspiracies, rivalries and jealousies—rather than their stated ideals of secularism and democracy—took root in Lebanon's tribal sediment. Kamal Salibi, Lebanon's historian laureate at the American University of Beirut, used to tell me the Palestinians had made the mistake of becoming

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another Lebanese tribe. The Palestinians' secular revolution died in Lebanon at the hands of its incompetent leadership and Lebanon's bellicose neighbors, Israel and Syria.

I had lived in Lebanon for six months before I made my first visit to Syria. I hated it. It was everything Lebanon was not: controlled, fearful, oppressive and conformist. Children wore military-style uniforms to school. Newspapers practiced Stalinesque obeisance to power. Billboards exhorted the masses to struggle for unity, socialism and Arabism. Visitors had to declare how much money they brought into the country, how much they were taking out and at which state banks they changed it into Syrian pounds. (Just about every Beirut shopkeeper dealt in dollars, francs, deutsche marks, lira and rubles.) Where the Lebanese cursed their leaders in loud voices, the Syrians whispered even the mildest, most hesitant criticism. It took me several visits to see behind the facade of party-military rule. In Syria there was a calm self-assurance that Lebanon lacked. The Syrian—as stolid as the Lebanese was flamboyant—knew who he was. Syrian Christians in particular had none of the identity crises that afflicted their co-religionists in Lebanon. More Christians and Jews lived in "Muslim" Syria than in "Christian" Lebanon. Although Syria was what the Lebanese Druse leader Kamal Jumblatt called a prison-state, the prisoners were generous, patient and interesting. And their history imposed upon them a duty to act, in Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser's words, as "the beating heart" of Arab nationalism.

Damascus was the capital in the seventh century of the Arabs' first empire—the Umayyad—and for a few months in the twentieth, of the independent state that Britain had promised the Arabs for their help in expelling the Ottoman Turks. Many Syrians—and not a few Lebanese and Jordanians—regard their country as a small part of a larger Arab homeland that includes Lebanon, Jordan and Israel—Suriya al-Kubra, Greater Syria. This ideal is not easily abandoned, any more than the Damascene obligation to prevent Lebanese and Palestinians from compromising with an Israel that permanently divides the Arabs from one another. The Damascenes will remind the visitor that the Crusaders, like the ancient Israelite kingdom, never conquered Damascus. This is an important part of the Syrian legacy, and it is not easily dismissed for modern political convenience.

Barely three years before my first trip to Damascus, Hafez al-Assad, the air force commander, had seized power in a bloodless putsch against the self-destructive deputy secretary general and fellow Baathist Salah Jadid. Assad in his early years as dictator must have felt vulnerable. Military dictators had come and gone as frequently as city buses since the first, CIA-backed, coup dissolved Syria's last fairly elected parliament in 1949. To add to the usual problems of retaining the throne, Assad came from a religious minority, an obscurantist offshoot of Shiite Islam, the Alawis, who had come to dominate the military under the French Mandate. The Sunni Muslim elite in Damascus did not welcome him, although they remained quiet about the fact. The only Sunnis he made room for in his regime, notably Defense Minister Moustafa Tlas and Vice-President Abdel Halim Khaddam, were neither Damascenes nor from prominent families. Internal resistance came from the armed assassins of the Sunni fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, who disliked Assad's sect as much as his party's secularism.

Where the Lebanese are known to curse their leaders in the loudest voices, Syrians whisper even the mildest, most hesitant criticism.

Lebanon—relatively free, tribal and allied to the West—was a potential base for subverting the Syrian regime, as Assad knew well. Syrian exiles in Lebanon had forged the Arab Socialist Baath Party in 1952 and took power in Damascus eleven years later. While I was making my first explorations of Syria, Assad and Egypt's president, Anwar Sadat, were planning a war to dislodge Israel from the Syrian and Egyptian territories it had seized in June 1967. That war took place in October 1973 and exchanged a few thousand lives for a few miles of land. It also made Assad—the near "liberator" of the Golan Heights—more secure and a player on the world stage in negotiations with then–US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Assad's prestige made him dangerous, however, to Lebanon, which had grown used to weak Syrian leaders whose diktats it could ignore.

Throughout the 1970s, skirmishes in Lebanon between Palestinian commandos and the Israeli army claimed more non-combatants than soldiers on both sides. They also weakened an already feeble Lebanese state that could not protect its citizens from either Israel or the PLO. Assad, who did not let the Palestinians breathe in Syria, sent them weapons and encouraged them in Lebanon—as long as they did not threaten his regime. The Palestinians hijacked airplanes, and the Israelis bombed refugee hovels and villages. Any responsible imperial power would have put a stop to it, but neither the Soviet Union nor the United States had the maturity to manage a local conflict in which both envisaged benefits to themselves. It was an ugly time, and the vicious civil war that erupted in April 1975 between Lebanon's Christian militias and the loose alliance of Palestinians, Lebanese leftists and Muslims made things worse.

In 1976 Assad met the prospect of a Palestinian leftist takeover of Lebanon with force. His regime's pro-Palestinian and socialist rhetoric could not mask the fact that its interests lay with maintaining balance in Beirut. A Palestinian-Lebanese leftist victory in Lebanon would have meant trouble for Syria, where the Sunni Muslim majority might have demanded power similar to that won by Muslims—both Palestinian and Lebanese—in Lebanon. Hafez al-Assad feared another probable consequence—an Israeli invasion of Lebanon to save the Christian establishment. Thus, he made his pact with the extreme Christian leadership. His army entered Lebanon under a banner of Palestinian liberation, fighting Palestinians on the way in. Syrian support for the Christians in the summer of 1976 enabled the Christian militias to destroy the last Palestinian refugee camp, Tal Zaatar, on the Christian side of Beirut. The massacre of a few thousand Palestinian civilians at Tal Zaatar may be laid at the feet of the Syrians, just as the Israelis would be held responsible for helping the same Christians to massacre civilians in two other Beirut Palestinian camps—Sabra and Shatila—under Israeli occupation in 1982. The United States and Israel accepted the Syrian intervention to suppress the PLO, with the proviso that no Syrian troops would tread south of a "red line" well north of Israel's border. In that ungoverned zone, war continued between the Palestinians and Israelis until 1982.

Meanwhile, the only Lebanese community to remain aloof from the civil war—the Shiites—was coming under other influences. Partly due to the interests of the large landowners who were their communal leaders, Shiites were

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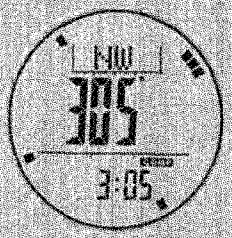

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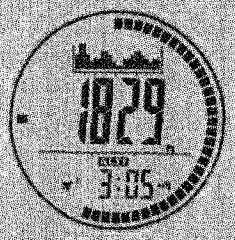

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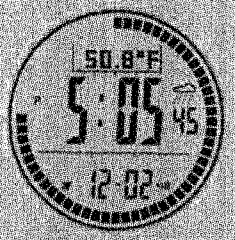

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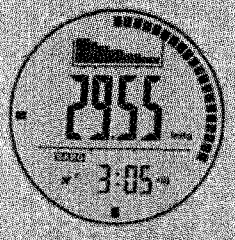

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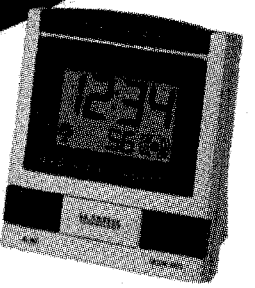

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the poorest community in the country. The Shiite clergy had been proselytizing among the displaced petite bourgeoisie and the peasantry since the 1960s, when their ideas were less fashionable than either communism or Arab nationalism. As Sheikh Naim Qassem, deputy leader of Hezbollah, writes in his history of the movement, "Initiated by a number of Islamic clerics just back from the holy schools of religion of Najaf in Iraq, the clerical teachings, speeches and cultural dialogue that ensued prompted many concerns and queries about Islam's proposed role in life." University students engaged in this process were "rare," and women's presence "was scarce and underwhelming." Undereducated, underemployed young men could not afford universities or nightclubs. The mosque was free, and within its confines they found brotherhood. Then came the Iranian revolution of 1979, which gave the Shiites hope, and the Israeli invasion of 1982, which gave them a cause. Thus Hezbollah, the Shiite Party of God, went from what Naim Qassem calls "humble, embryonic beginnings" to "actual victory, achieved on May 25, 2000, when Israeli troops were forced to withdraw as a result of Hizballah operations—an unprecedented achievement in fifty years of struggle with the Israeli enemy." Damascus, which had made common cause with the anti-secularists of Tehran against rival Baathists in Baghdad, found in Hezbollah a useful proxy to attack Israel without incurring Israeli reprisals in Syria itself.

Three clerics dominated the Shiite movement: Imam Musa al-Sadr, Sheik Mohammed Mehdi Shamseddine and Sheik Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah. Of the three, Sadr was the most charismatic. A man of Lebanese origin who had grown up in Iran and spoke Arabic with a Persian accent, Sadr founded both the Shiite official clerical body, the Higher Islamic Shiite Council, and the largest Shiite grouping, the Movement of the Disinherited. When the Israelis bombed their training camp in the Bekaa Valley in 1974, Sadr announced the creation of Amal, the armed wing of his movement, some of whose members received training from Arafat's Fatah. Three years into the civil war, in August 1978, Sadr vanished while visiting Libya—a murder or kidnapping for which Lebanon's Shiites have not forgiven Muammar el-Qaddafi. Shamseddine became head of the Higher Islamic Shiite Council, making him official head of the community and equal to the Sunni Mufti and the Maronite Patriarch. Fadlallah would later be accused of being the "spiritual leader" of Hezbollah, although he neither joined nor led it. His notoriety made him the target of a failed assassination attempt in March 1985 by a CIA-trained Lebanese unit, when a car bomb intended for him killed more than eighty civilian bystanders. By then the ten-year civil war had attracted armies from Syria, Israel, the United States, France, Britain, Italy and, as peacekeepers, at least twenty other countries.

While the Iranian revolution of 1979 gave Lebanese Shiites hope, the Israeli invasion three years later gave them a cause.

The war of attrition between Arafat and Israel escalated in the late 1970s after Egypt's peace overtures left it a free hand to interfere in Lebanon. Israel invaded twice—in 1978 and more decisively in 1982, on the pretext that invasion was a reprisal for the bungled assassination attempt on its ambassador in London, even though the perpetrators were linked to Abu Nidal, Arafat's sworn enemy. Arafat for his part had observed an effective cease-fire with Israel between 1979 and 1982. Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon's long-planned Operation Peace in Galilee expelled Arafat and forced the Lebanese parliament to elect Israel's Christian Maronite favorite, Bashir Gemayel, president. The Israeli order in Lebanon was born. Despite more than 16,000 Lebanese and Palestinian deaths in the invasion, the new Lebanon suited the Phalangists and their Israeli benefactors. But they ignored a conference in Tehran of Lebanon's Shiite *ulama* (religious scholars) in August 1982 under the guidance of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, whose excellent *In the Path of Hizbullah* is as critical of the movement as Sheikh Naim Qassem's *Hizbullah: The Story From Within* is partisan, writes, "During the meeting, Khomeini urged the 'ulama' to go back home and mobilize the people to fight the Israeli occupation and to turn the mosques into bases for their jihad activities." That is exactly what they did, and they won.

Suicide bombings, what Qassem calls "martyrdom operations," began on November 11, 1982, in south Lebanon. "The enemy," Qassem writes, "could not tolerate many attacks like that from the pioneer of all martyr attacks, Sheikh Ahmad Kassir, who drove...a car strapped with explosives right into the headquarters of the Israeli commander in the city of Tyre, wounding and killing 141 Israeli officers, a further ten declared missing." The significance of the bombing eluded both the Israelis and the United States. Israeli officers were telling me and other journalists in south Lebanon a few weeks later that the Shiite population still supported Israel's presence out of gratitude for ridding them of the PLO. Because the main Shiite militia, Amal, had yet to resist the Israeli occupation, Israel found it easier to deceive itself. Amal's inconsistent approach to the Israelis left the field open to the clerics who would found Hezbollah. Missing the signal of the Tyre attack, the Americans took insufficient precautions against suicide attacks at their embassy in April 1983 and the US Marine barracks the following October.

The Marines had overseen the PLO evacuation from Beirut in August 1982 at Israel's request. As in Iraq later, the mission was only beginning. The Marines were forced to return to Lebanon, because Israel broke its promise not to invade West Beirut and presided over the Sabra and Shatila massacres by the same Christian militiamen who had massacred other Palestinian refugees at Tal Zaatar. The Reagan Administration compounded its error by compelling Lebanon to sign an unpopular accord with Israel on May 17, 1983, and allowing President Amin Gemayel to arrest and torture his Muslim and Druse opponents. Syria foiled the United States and Gemayel by creating Lebanon's National Salvation Front out of every group disenchanted with rightist Maronite rule, Israeli occupation and American tutelage. They rallied around opposition to the May 17 "surrender" to Israel that Secretary of State George Shultz had brokered. Hezbollah drove the United States out with a suicide bombing that killed 241 American servicemen on October 23, 1983, and other attacks. For the next seventeen years it launched operations against Israel's troops in Lebanon. Israel gave up most of its Lebanese territory in 1985 and retreated from the rest in May 2000, save a thirty-square-mile patch called the Shabaa Farms. In the meantime, not only Hezbollah but its Shiite rivals of the more secular Amal—as well as many leftist movements—adopted "martyrdom operations" against the Israeli occupier. It did not take long for the Palestinians, seeing the success of these operations, to imitate them in the occupied territories—the West Bank and Gaza Strip—as well as in

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Israel itself. Behind the scenes, Syria and Iran could claim credit for Israel's first military defeat. Hafez al-Assad, whose air force had been destroyed and whose army had been driven out of Beirut by Israel in 1982, lived to see his army return to Beirut and his Israeli adversary humiliated. Then, on June 10, 2000, Assad died—leaving his son, Bashar, a precarious inheritance.

The Lebanese civil war ended when the United States—as quid pro quo for Syrian participation in the war to dislodge Iraq from Kuwait in 1991—permitted the Syrian army to occupy the Christian areas in Lebanon. Syria enforced order, and it influenced most political decisions. It took Lebanese army and security officers for training at its military academy in Homs, and its rule allowed the Lebanese to rebuild the country they had so assiduously destroyed for fifteen years. Some of Syria's senior officers enriched themselves in collaboration with Lebanese politicians. Lebanon became Syria's colony, where those who cooperated fared better than those who defended their country's independence. This year it was Syria's turn to be humiliated. Pushing its rule in Lebanon too far, its agents assassinated former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri on February 14 in Beirut. In 2004 the UN, inspired by the United States and France, had passed Security Council Resolution 1559 calling on Syria to leave Lebanon. Bashar al-Assad had no choice but to acquiesce. His regime had already become a target of American and Israeli diatribes and subversion.

The Assad regime's fear of destabilization by the United States and Israel explains in part its ineptitude in Lebanon, where the Hariri assassination dramatically backfired. Rather than intimidate the Lebanese, Hariri's murder galvanized a majority of the population to pour into the streets to insist on the evacuation of Syria's army. The crowds also demanded, in chants and on billboards, *al-haqiqa*—the truth—about the Hariri murder. An international investigation, ordered in June by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to find some part of the truth, presented its findings to the Lebanese government on October 19 and to the UN the next day. Detlev Mehlis, the Berlin state prosecutor, amassed thousands of documents, telephone intercepts, interrogation transcripts and forensic evidence to produce a damning indictment of the Lebanese security service chiefs and their Syrian masters. Armed with Mehlis's evidence, Lebanese police have arrested former senior intelligence and security chiefs, as well as the

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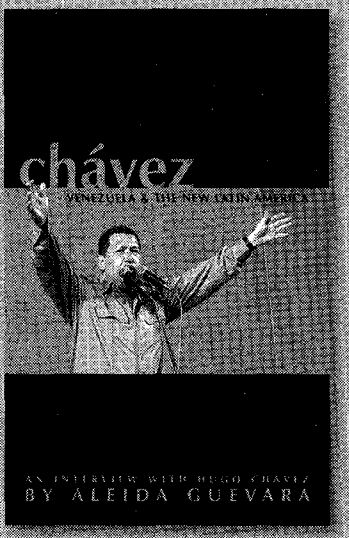

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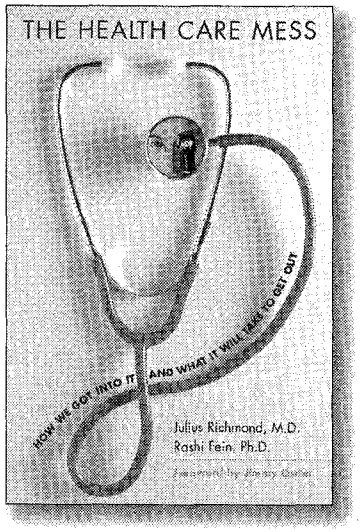

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leaders of an obscure Syrian-supported religious group, Al-Ahbash. Much of the evidence is circumstantial, and the testimony of one key witness, a convicted fraudster named Zuhir Ibn Mohamed Said Saddik, has been questioned. But the case against Syrian officials is convincing and, as the report itself states, requires further investigation. The UN has extended Mehlis's mandate to December 15 to follow lines of inquiry that appear to point directly at the regime in Damascus. "Given the infiltration of Lebanese institutions and society by the Syrian and Lebanese intelligence services working in tandem," the Mehlis report notes, "it would be difficult to envisage a scenario whereby such a complex assassination plot could have been carried out without their knowledge."

The evidence actually goes further than that conclusion: Some witnesses spoke not of Syrian "knowledge" of the assassination but of Syrian direction of it. Lebanese allies of Hariri told Mehlis of the threats that senior Syrians, including their intelligence chief in Lebanon, General Rustum Ghazali, made to Hariri—threats denied by the Syrians themselves. There was regular telephone contact, according to the records, between those involved in the dirty work of watching Hariri and dispatching the white Mitsubishi van (stolen the previous October in Japan) with 1,000 kilograms of TNT, and senior Lebanese officers who were themselves in regular contact with their Syrian counterparts. The Syrians, on the testimony of some witnesses, set up a Lee Harvey Oswald–type fall guy in the form of a Palestinian refugee named Ahmad Abu Adass, who was forced to make a videotaped claim that he was the suicide bomber who killed the infidel Hariri. The trail leads to the office of the pro-Syrian Lebanese president, Emile Lahoud, whose cell phone received a call from one of the suspects only minutes before the bomb that killed Hariri exploded. The imbroglio that led to Hariri's death began with Syria's insistence that Lahoud remain president after his term of office expired last year—which involved a dubious amendment to the Constitution. The acrimony between Lahoud and Hariri altered the political divide from Christian versus Muslim to pro- versus anti-Syrian factions—with Muslims and Christians on both sides. Syria felt it needed Lahoud in place to maintain its control of Lebanon, something Bashar al-Assad told Hariri at their final meeting in Damascus in August 2004.

A thorough investigation should probe the other murders and bombings in Lebanon: not only the attempt on the life of anti-Syrian Druse MP Marwan Hamadeh in October 2004 and the post-Hariri murders of former Communist Party chief George Hawi and journalist Samir Kassir but also the assassination of Druse and leftist chief Kamal Jumblatt in 1977, as well as President Rene Moawad in 1989 and many others. Suspicion has long fallen on Syria, but until now hard evidence has been lacking. As more and more witnesses testify, the Lebanese may learn the *haqiqa* about all these outrages (perhaps including murders committed by other intelligence services, like Israel's, America's, Iraq's and Iran's). What the United States does with this information, however, is another matter. This must worry the Lebanese as much as it does the Syrians. For Lebanon, despite its obsession with removing itself from Syrian tutelage, wants to keep its war buried in the past. No Lebanese, apart from a few psychopaths, would like to risk a resumption of conflict merely to dispose of the Assad regime.

In Lebanon, something happened after the war. Most Lebanese came to think less about politics and more about themselves. Without the war to distract people, the suicide rate for those not seeking martyrdom rose. Many Lebanese looked to psychiatry, spiritualism, hedonism, house redecoration, art or plastic surgery to change themselves. Earlier this year a businessman in Beirut told me that about 80 percent of the country's billboards advertised beauty enhancement—nose jobs, liposuction, tanning salons, skin lighteners and hair restorers. This signals abandonment of the political realm, as often happens when war destroys the idealism that led to it. Alan Ross observed something similar among British poets in the aftermath of World War II, a "turning away from public issues to private problems, a nostalgia that looks wearily back from the social pressures of an age dealing in ideological betrayal, to the more involved but less revealing crises of the human heart." What was true for C. Day Lewis, Louis MacNeice and John Betjeman appears to hold for Lebanon's writers after their longer, home-grown war.

Malu Halasa and Roseanne Khalaf's collection of Lebanese postwar writing, *Transit Beirut*, depicts the apolitical concerns of postwar Lebanese. "My Lebanese Sandwich," by Maher Kassar and Ziad Halwani, depicts the Lebanese male facing a life in his family's house on an upper floor that his parents are waiting to add as soon as he marries. "Then, there

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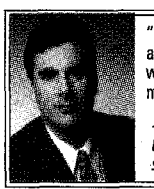

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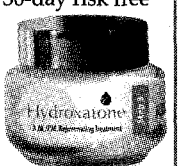

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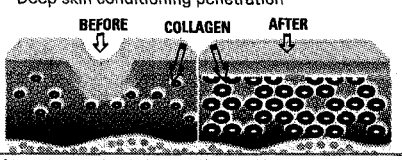

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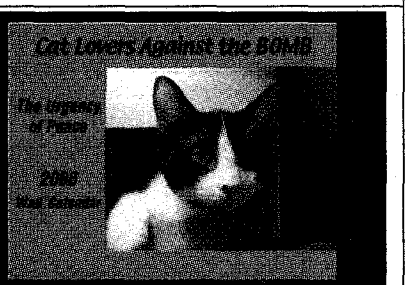

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will be two rival kitchens competing just to feed you. Your wife will get hell from your mother. First, she will pretend to teach her how to cook. She will give her the recipes just the way you've always liked them. Only for some reason, they will never turn out nearly as good. Too much salt, overcooked, not enough cinnamon." This goes on for years until "the secret has been passed on and she, your mother, has made sure that you will be fed the same food. FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE." Food for the Lebanese, as for the Italians, takes precedence over war. Each village has a specialty that no other village can cook properly. Zgharta claims the finest kibbeh. Zahleh distills the best arak. Chtaura produces the purest labneh, soured cream and yogurt. Others claim the best bread, cheese, hummus, stews or sweets. And yet Lebanon wanted something more. "During the war," Kassar and Halwani write, "people dreamt of having a McDonald's in Beirut." Peace delivered the fruit of American civilization at last:

> Civilization.... We asked for it and we got it, big time. Along with the new roads, the new infrastructure, the new international airport, a brand new downtown, cellular phone networks, satellite TV, superstar European DJs and modern beach resorts, the thirteen-year-long effort to reconstruct Lebanon after the war led to the opening of 9 McDonald's, 8 Burger Kings, 4 KFCs, 11 Starbucks, 6 Dunkin' Donuts, 1 TGI Fridays and 8 Pizza Huts.... Like a new toy, the Lebanese played with the Whopper, tried the McFlurry and collected all the buttons and badges from TGI Fridays.

One of the writers tries the latest McDonald's gimmick: the McArabia. "Would a Swedish person," he asks himself, "accept asking for a 'McScandinavia' or worse, a Frenchman order a 'McFrance'?"

Longing for antebellum grandeur obsesses many Lebanese too young to remember it. Antoine Boulad writes in "Place des Martyrs" that the old center of Beirut induces "a kind of painful nostalgia. It breaks my heart and tears my consciousness apart." Abbas El-Zein writes for all Beirutis, "I take a stroll in the beautifully restored old city of Beirut. Dark thoughts keep me company. Will all this be destroyed again?" Roseanne Khalaf, who returned to Lebanon in 1995 after eleven years away, writes in "Living Between Worlds," "This was not the Lebanon I had come back to in my mind; not the country I had revisited countless times in my imagination. Perhaps the Lebanon I had known and loved never existed at all."

Postwar wistfulness has not affected Hezbollah. Never a participant in the Muslim-Christian, rightist-leftist clashes that defined most of the civil war, Hezbollah went on battling Israeli occupation after the Taif accords of 1989 and the Syrian conquest of East Beirut in 1990 officially brought peace. (The United States had agreed to Syrian control of all Lebanon in exchange for Syrian participation in the war to expel Iraq from Kuwait.) The party agreed to take part in the country's first postwar parliamentary elections in 1992 and every election since. It stayed out of government, however, until this year, when it assumed the energy portfolio. Its evolution on the Lebanese political scene—from kidnappers of foreign nationals in the 1980s to responsible and honest legislators—has impressed even the most secular Christians. Yet because Israel took another ten years from war's end to withdraw, Hezbollah remained an armed resistance. Even after Israel's withdrawal, Hezbollah did not give up—holding out for Shebaa Farms—and thus still refuses to disarm, as all other Lebanese militias did after 1990.

The complicated history of Shebaa made it problematic for other Lebanese, who had acquiesced when Syria seized the area from Lebanon in 1957. Syria lost Shebaa to Israel—along with its own Golan Heights—in 1967. The UN ruled that Shebaa was a matter for discussion between Syria and Israel, and most Lebanese—who do not want war with Israel or anyone else—accepted it. Hezbollah has not renounced its principle that all Lebanese territory must be liberated. Syria, which had claimed Shebaa for itself until Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, cynically chose to regard it as Lebanese territory in order to use Hezbollah as its last point of pressure on Israel so that it could maintain leverage in negotiations for the Golan Heights. Shebaa allows Hezbollah—in soul-searching mode after its bungled attempt to support a continued Syrian presence in Lebanon—to remain on the only footing it has ever known: war. Hezbollah has also reversed the relationship it enjoyed with the Palestinian organizations, who taught the Shiites how to use Kalashnikovs in the mid-1970s. Now Hezbollah teaches young Palestinians not only how to handle weapons but how to develop strategies and to trust God to bring them victory—as He did in Lebanon—over Israel. Sheikh Naim Qassem writes, "What happened in Lebanon

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can be repeated in Palestine." This makes Hezbollah and its state benefactors, Syria and Iran, an Israeli obsession.

The United States managed to rob Syria of long-term gains in Lebanon in April when, in combination with Lebanese rage over the assassination of Hariri and UN Resolution 1559, it forced the Syrian army out of the country. Israel, since Egypt withdrew from the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1979, has sought to eliminate Syria as its only credible frontline adversary. Syria is clearly the next phase of the American-Israeli battle for the Middle East, and the Lebanese fear that their country will become the battle's terrain. It probably will, if the United States pushes Lebanon to sign a peace treaty with Israel, disarm Hezbollah or allow the US Navy to construct a base on the Lebanese shore.

Back in 1996, when Richard Perle, Douglas Feith and David and Meyrav Wurmser were still working for Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel, their "Study Group on a New Israeli Strategy Toward 2000" recommended "securing tribal alliances with Arab tribes that cross into Syrian territory and are hostile to the Syrian ruling elite" in a position paper called "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm," adopted by their subsequent employer, George W. Bush. As well as using the tribes like latter-day Lawrences of Arabia, they had another ploy for dealing with Damascus: "This effort can focus on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq—an important Israeli strategic objective in its own right—as a means of foiling Syria's regional ambitions." What are Syria's regional ambitions? Is a relatively weak state of 18 million, whose oil production barely covers domestic consumption, whose unemployment runs to at least 20 percent, whose farm laborers earn their living in Lebanon and whose army relies on old Soviet weapons, worth so much trouble? The United States is using Lebanon, Syrian exiles and Syrian Kurds to harass the Syrian regime; and the consequences could be as harmful to Syria as the American invasion has been to Iraq.

Flynt Leverett, who served on the National Security Council staff under Condoleezza Rice, notes in *Inheriting Syria* that the neoconservatives at the Defense Department and in Vice President Cheney's office "were intrigued by the idea of using Lebanon as a pressure point against Damascus from the beginning of Bush's tenure." The Syrians have attempted to placate the United States by turning over Al Qaeda suspects, expelling radical Palestinian leaders, sending Iraqi exiles back to Iraq and cooperating with the US military along their border with Iraq. That was insufficient for the Bush Administration, which rebuffed Syria's overtures. The civilian hierarchy in the Defense Department ordered the commander of the 101st Airborne Division, Gen. David Petraeus, to cease his fruitful working relationship with the Syrian military last year. This political decision may have increased the risk to American soldiers in Iraq. The same neoconservatives also rejected Syrian assistance on Al Qaeda.

If the Syrian regime is overthrown, the alternatives may be no more congenial to American-Israeli interests. A pro-American regime installed by the United States à la Iraq would undoubtedly face a rebellion similar to Iraq's. The other option, government by the Sunni fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, would be unlikely to produce a felicitous peace along Israel's border with Lebanon. It might be more inclined than the current president, young Bashar al-Assad, to open the Golan Heights to infiltration by Palestinian and other commandos for the first time. The inevitable Israeli reprisals would suit a revolutionary fundamentalist regime. As Hezbollah discovered when Israel occupied Lebanon, it is easier to unify people for war to save the homeland than to organize them when there is no threat. ■

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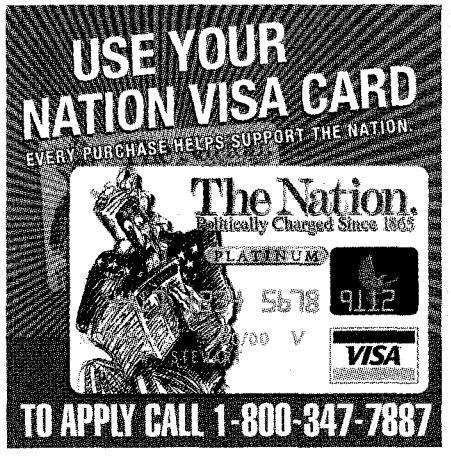

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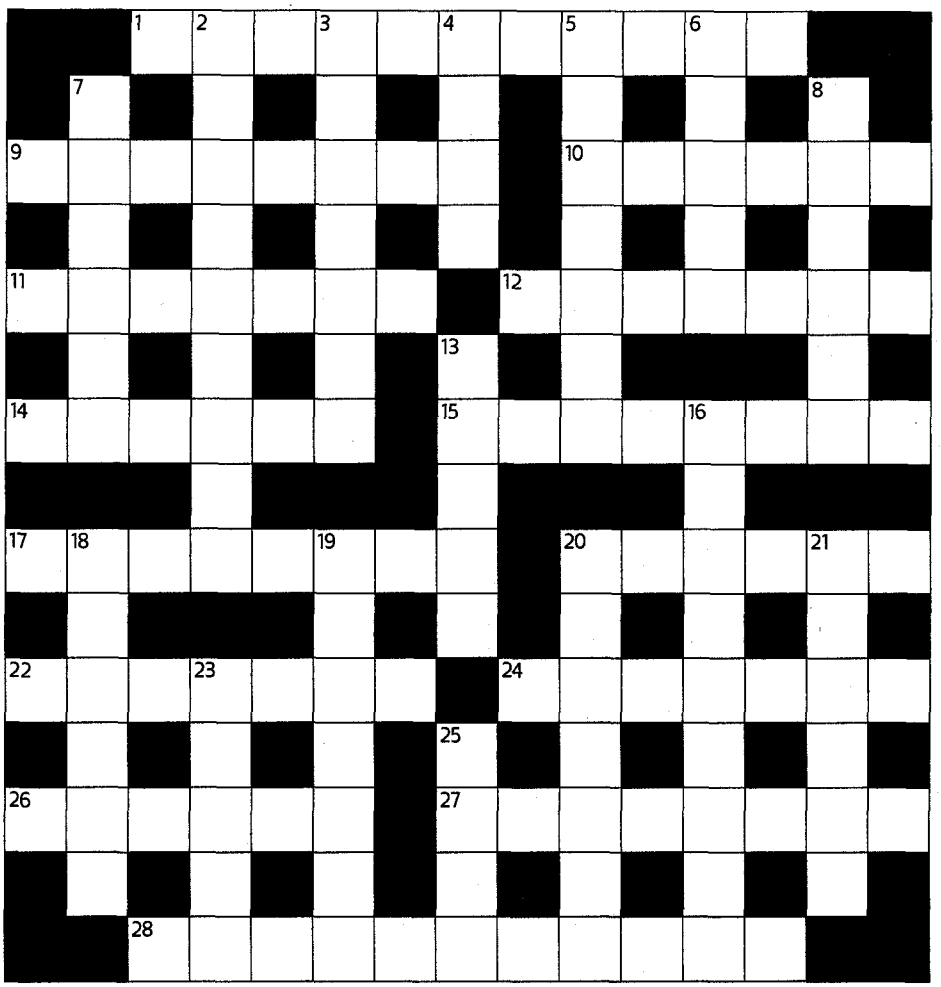

ACROSS

1 Still, some people are kind of dumb to cut them, and stay that way. (6,5)

9 It shows that a novice doesn't get fat—but one might have a high calling. (8)

10 Rise, and add pants, by the sound of it, for just deserts. (4,2)

11 Sounds like a month needs direction for one who said 10, in order to see me. (3,4)

12 The gentleman from Rome, as a good indication of what comes from mine. (7)

14 What the younger generation used to drive suggests a uranium core. (3,3)

15 Does it imply an expected occurrence, such as a drunken brawl? (4,4)

17 With this, one might look at what receives the message, but it's too difficult to get the full extent of it. (8)

20 It might involve a feast, I realize quite logically! (6)

22 As an artist, she started out all right, but the reverse charge has an iron end. (7)

24 Such stories as might be told to Christopher Robin exist around Ed and Tim, too. (7)

26 Does part of the document prove Santa has a point to make? (6)

27 Meetings that classically go by the clock? (8)

28 If you think it's fair, and are proven correct, you possibly are! (7-4)

DOWN

2 Evidently a pressing occasion is successful—but it's something less than a steel plant. (4-5)

3 and **18** In uniform, with weapons? (Stars might be said to be so on Oscar night.) (7,2,4)

4 and **16** What the London bus conductor might say, if you have sat wrongly in theirs. (4,3,6)

5 Cutting in, in the nicest way. (A suggestion to see such a collection may be a come-on.) (7)

6 Greek character? I'm not upset! (5)

7 A literary character written with crayon, possibly. (6)

8 27 might commence, if you have one! (Classically, whither the spirit?) (6)

13 One who needed 21, with her sort going in two directions! (5)

16 See 4

18 See 3

19 Not the regular description of what might be badly syncopated, when the policeman is not on duty. (3-4)

20 What the worrywart does having looked in the tool-box. (4,3)

21 This resulted in mating—badly—in the tale. (6)

23 Get away from this, with transportation possibly due. (6)

25 Proving a bit of land lies awkwardly here. (4)

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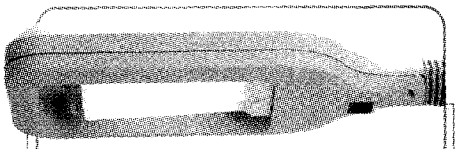

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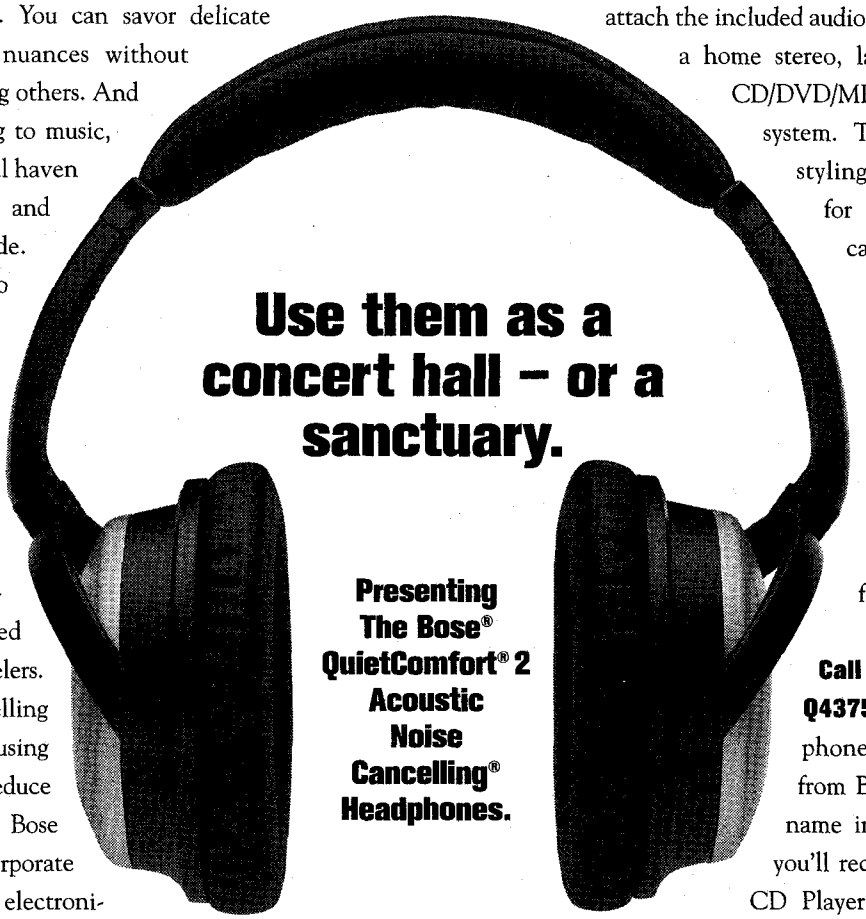
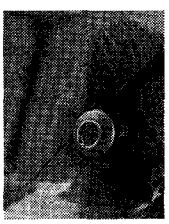


Use them as a concert hall – or a sanctuary.

Presenting The Bose® QuietComfort® 2 Acoustic Noise Cancelling® Headphones.

Reduce noise with Bose technology. Our headphones were designed primarily for airplane travelers. But owners soon started telling us how much they enjoy using them in other places to reduce distractions around them. Bose QC™ 2 headphones incorporate patented technology that electronically identifies and dramatically reduces noise, while faithfully preserving the music, movie dialogue or tranquility you desire. *Technologyreview.com* reports, "It's as if someone behind your back reached out, found the volume control of the world, and turned it way, way, down." Perfect for listening to music, whether you're on the go, at home or in the office.



Enhanced audio from our best sounding headphones ever. When QC2 headphones were first introduced, *CNET* said, "All sorts of music – classical, rock, and jazz – sounded refined and natural." *Travel & Leisure Golf* said, "Forget 'concertlike' comparisons; you'll think you're onstage with the band." With their enhanced audio performance, today's QC2 headphones are even better, delivering audio that's so crisp and clear you may find yourself discovering new subtleties in your music.

"The QuietComfort 2 lives up to its name...It's easy to forget they're on your head." That's what columnist Rich Warren says. To enjoy peace and tranquility, simply turn them on. To add Bose quality sound, attach the included audio cord and connect them to a home stereo, laptop computer, portable CD/DVD/MP3 player or in-flight audio system. They also offer improved styling and a fold-flat design for easy storage in the slim carrying case.

Try the QC2 headphones for yourself, risk free. Our 30-day, in-home trial guarantees your satisfaction. If you aren't delighted, simply return your headphones for a full refund.

Call 1-800-417-2073, ext. Q4375 today. These headphones are available directly from Bose – the most respected name in sound. Order now and you'll receive a free portable Bose CD Player with skip protection – a $50 value. Plus, **shipping is free.** So call and discover a very different kind of headphone – Bose QuietComfort® 2 Acoustic Noise Cancelling headphones.

FREE Bose CD Player when you order by Jan. 31, 2006.

To order or for a free information kit, call:

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